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PHOTOS BY KHALID MOHAMMED/AP

Protesters burn property in front of the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad on Tuesday.

Iraqi protesters storm US Embassy

Militiamen breach compound shouting 'Death to America' in wake of airstrikes

BY QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA
Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Dozens of Iraqi Shiite militiamen and their supporters shouting "Death to America" broke into the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad on Tuesday, smashing a main door and setting fire to a reception area, angered over deadly U.S. airstrikes targeting the Iran-backed militia. U.S. guards fired tear gas and palls of

smoke rose over the grounds.

An Associated Press reporter at the scene saw flames rising from inside the compound and at least three U.S. troops on the roof of the main embassy building. There was a fire at the reception area near the compound's parking lot but it was unclear what had started it. A man on a loudspeaker urged the mob not to enter the compound, saying, "The message was delivered."

SEE EMBASSY ON PAGE 6



Iraqi protesters damage property inside the U.S. Embassy.

Military, federal civilians set for largest pay boost in years

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

January will usher in the biggest pay raise since 2010 for U.S. service members, and also bring a long-awaited salary increase for federal civilian employees.

Service members and Defense Department civilians are each slated to receive an average 3.1% bump in annual pay as part of the \$737 billion military budget for 2020 — \$22 billion more than last year's defense measure.

Congress passed the record-setting defense bill in December with strong bipartisan support. It includes the creation of a Space Force, one of President Donald Trump's top priorities for the Pentagon, and provisions aimed at improving military housing conditions. The Department of Veterans Affairs will get a 9% boost in funding, its largest budgetary increase ever.

The 2020 raise is the largest for service members since a 3.4% annual pay hike in 2010. Since then, annual increases have ranged between 1% and 2.6%.

For federal civilian employees, the 3.1% average increase will constitute the largest raise since 2008, when they received a 3.5% average pay adjustment, statistics published by the Federal News Network stated. For much of the 2010s, federal employees received either no raise or a 1% annual hike.

The White House had originally planned to freeze federal pay in 2020 but reversed course in August and allowed a 2.6% across-the-board increase. On Friday, Trump signed an executive order putting into effect a measure that adds another locality pay averaging an extra 0.5%.

The civilian increases statewide would range from 2.85% to 3.52% with locality pay factored in, a Federal News Network analysis found. The highest average increases will come in the Washington metro area and around other large cities.

SEE PAY ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Former Nissan boss Ghosn flees to Lebanon over ‘injustice’

Associated Press

TOKYO — Nissan's former chairman, Carlos Ghosn, said Tuesday from Lebanon that he was not fleeing justice but instead left Japan to avoid “injustice and political persecution” over financial misconduct allegations during his tenure leading the automaker.

Ghosn had been released on bail by a Tokyo court while awaiting trial but was not allowed to travel overseas. He disclosed his location in a statement through

his representatives that did not describe how he left Japan, where he had been under surveillance.

“I am now in Lebanon and will no longer be held hostage by a rigged Japanese justice system where guilt is presumed, discrimination is rampant, and basic human rights are denied, in flagrant disregard of Japan’s legal obligations under international law and treaties it is bound to uphold,” the statement said.

Japanese media quoted prosecutors speaking anonymously

who said they did not know how Ghosn had left.

Ghosn, who is of Lebanese origin and holds French, Lebanese and Brazilian passports, was arrested in November 2018 and was expected to face trial in April 2020.

Ghosn has been charged with under-reporting his future compensation and breach of trust.

Japan does not have an extradition treaty with Lebanon. It is unclear what steps authorities might take.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Jan. 2)	\$1,1492
Euro buys (Jan. 2)	€0.8702
U.S. dollar (Jan. 2)	\$1.35
Japanese yen (Jan. 2)	¥100.00
South Korean won (Jan. 2)	₩128.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	£1.3215
Canada (Dollar)	1.3003
China (Yuan)	¥0.36
Denmark (Krone)	6.6591
Egypt (Pound)	16.0662
Euro	€1,121.99/1,119.13
Hong Kong (Dollar)	HK\$7889
Hungary (Forint)	294.68
Israel (Shekel)	3.4570
Japan (Yen)	¥62
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3032
Norway (Krone)	8.7756
Panama (Balboa)	0.9999
Poland (Zlota)	PLN 3.79
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7515
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3448
South Korea (Won)	₩1,154.33

(Military exchange rates are those facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), refer to the commercial rates facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying or selling foreign currencies in exchange to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	1.55
3-month bill	1.52
30-year bond	2.34

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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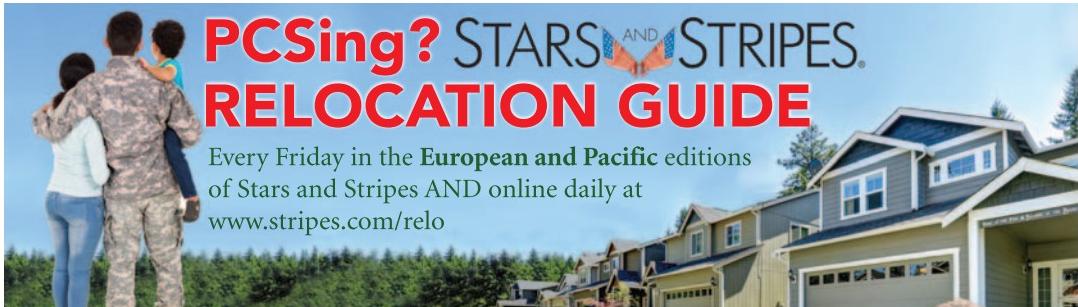
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MILITARY

PCS tax bills for civilian employees are coming due

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

Just before the holidays, Mo Bak, an engineer for the federal government, received a letter demanding \$1,600 to reimburse the Defense Department for taxes it paid to move her for her job.

She'd relocated with her two children in 2019 from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to Yokota Air Base, both in Japan. The bill covered taxes on the costs to ship her property about \$25 miles from one base to the other.

"(I) honestly didn't think it was going to be such a huge amount — and this was just on a move-in-country," Bak said. "If I was coming from the states it would be even more insane."

Bak, like hundreds of other federal employees hired after Jan. 1, 2018, was caught by a change in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 that did away with a deduction for moving expenses, including what the government spent to move its own employees. That money instead was redefined as taxable income.

Now many of those employees must repay the Defense Finance Accounting Service the money it paid the IRS on their behalf. Some will also have to file amended returns for 2018 reflecting the moving benefit.

The 2017 tax law change left DFAS to implement a new system to withhold taxes on moving ben-

efits for DOD civilian employees.

In September 2018, it began withholding taxes on moving-related reimbursemnts to employees, but a system to withhold taxes on payments to vendors — such as shipping or storage companies — was not implemented until the following year.

That meant employees who moved before September 2019 were still on the hook for Medicare, Social Security and federal income taxes on the money the government paid directly to packing, moving and shipping companies.

Those tax bills are now coming due, and thousands of federal employees like Bak should expect debt letters and updated federal income returns in their mailboxes this month, according to DFAS.

DFAS in November began notifying those DOD employees by email of upcoming tax bills, DFAS said.

Since then, Stars and Stripes interviewed more than a dozen affected workers who reported receiving tax bills between \$1,500 and \$15,000 for moving benefits.

Tax bill breakdown

All moving benefits are taxable now, but because withholding started in September 2018, the outstanding taxes are related only to money paid directly to vendors. Other moving costs such as airfare or hotels were already

taxed when the employee submitted a claim for reimbursement.

For those who moved in 2018, DFAS paid the IRS the Social Security and Medicare taxes on money it paid third-party vendors — such as commercial moving companies. For 2019 moves, DFAS also paid the 22% income tax on those payments.

The DFAS debt letters are to reimburse the agency those expenditures.

Employees who moved in 2018 must pay the IRS directly the 22% income tax on the money paid to outside vendors, DFAS said. Those employees will receive corrected federal wage and earning forms — called W-2Cs — amending their 2018 reported income to reflect both earned wages and expenses the government paid to move them.

Reimbursement

Affected federal employees can recoup the money they pay in taxes on their moving allowances by applying to either of two programs: Withholding Tax Allowance or Relocation Income Tax Allowance.

A loophole that previously excluded new, retired or separated employees since 2018 from receiving reimbursement was fixed with the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

Prior language in the U.S. tax code enacting those programs



CHRISTIAN LOPEZ/Stars and Stripes

A mover carries a family's possessions from base housing at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, on Nov. 13. A change in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 did away with a deduction for moving expenses.

used the word "employee" when defining eligibility for those programs. That meant people technically between jobs — those who left a civilian job, moved and started a federal job or who quit a federal job — were considered ineligible for reimbursement of the tax on their moving benefit.

"In the case of retirees, it was a betrayal of promises made to them years or even decades earlier, when they first joined [federal work]," the Federal Education Association said in a Dec. 12 statement.

But the defense authorization act — signed into law Dec. 20

— changed the language from "employee" to "individual," making incoming and outgoing employees eligible for the Relocation Income Tax Allowance.

The change is also retroactive, extending the program to those who moved "anytime in the past two calendar years," according to the teacher's union.

Affected employees can file for tax reimbursement through the RITA program after their 2019 or amended 2018 tax returns are submitted, according to DFAS.

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Former Marine pitches Australian-US amphibious force

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. and Australia should establish a combined amphibious force including 2,000 Marines and a similar number of sailors based in Darwin, Australia, to build regional support for countering China's ambitions in the western Pacific, according to a former Marine colonel.

Grant Newsham, now a senior researcher with the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, Tokyo, said Monday that the Marine Corps, which rotated 2,500 Marines through Darwin during the summer, needs to see Australia as more than just a great place to train.

"I look at it as more of an opportunity to influence not just in Australia but right out to the heart of Southeast Asia," Newsham said.

Darwin is a lot farther from Chinese shore-based missile batteries than places where the Marines already have a permanent presence in the region, such as Okinawa.

Gen. David H. Berger, commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote in a commentary published



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

U.S. Marines secure Kings Beach near the Australian town of Bowen during an amphibious exercise July 22. A former Marine colonel says an Australian-American amphibious force in the western Pacific should be considered.

Dec. 5 by War on the Rocks, a website on national security, about the challenges posed by the rise of Chinese military power in the Pacific.

Berger wrote that U.S. "forward bases and legacy infrastructure within the adversary's weapons engagement zone are now extremely vulnerable."

Newsham said an "Australian-American Amphibious Force" supported by amphibious ships from both nations could solve

that problem. Such a force could be home-ported in Darwin along with facilities such as American schools and shops, he said.

The facility could serve as a schoolhouse for amphibious forces from other nations in the region such as New Zealand, Singapore, Japan and South Korea. And Darwin could host an amphibious version of the Rim of the Pacific exercise that is held in Hawaii every other year, he said.

"Draw foreign militaries into

your orbit to have them see themselves as trusted partners and equals," he said.

Darwin-based Marines could travel to nearby Southeast Asia to train with locals and establish a presence, Newsham said.

"The more you do and the more places you do it, the more influence you are going to have," he said. "Otherwise you are like the Harlem Globetrotters — you show up once in a while and go away."

Darwin is the perfect spot to work on guidance from Berger to send small contingents of Marines throughout the region, Newsham said.

"The Marines haven't done the work to get the access to put that policy into effect, but Darwin is a great place to build influence," he said.

The port already has plenty of room for amphibious ships but creating a purpose-built base would make it even better, he said.

The U.S. and South Korea armies activated their first combined division by adding South Korean troops to the 2nd Infantry Division in 2015. Newsham

suggested that doing something similar in Australia would be a simpler task.

The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, for example, was formed in 1914 during World War I.

The new amphibious force wouldn't require stationing an aircraft carrier Down Under, Newsham said. Air support for the Marines could be provided by aircraft operating from bases in the Northern Territory or new F-35B stealth jets flying off the decks of amphibious ships, he said.

James Holmes, a strategist at the Naval War College, wrote on Dec. 9 in National Interest magazine that concerns about China could boost Australian support for a permanent U.S. military presence Down Under.

"Stationing military forces overseas inspires trust. In turn, an unbreakable bond between America and Australia could give China pause the next time it considers making mischief," he wrote.

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MILITARY

Tricare OKs laser therapy for some GIs' razor bumps

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The military's health care system will now pay for some service members with severe razor bumps to receive laser therapy treatment at civilian facilities.

Tricare says it will foot the laser bill for active-duty personnel suffering from pseudofolliculitis barbae, or PFB, once skin creams and other conservative treatments have failed.

Laser therapy can be expensive but it's considered the most effective treatment for severe PFB, a persistent irritation most common on the face and neck caused by shaving.

The new Tricare policy was announced in December and first reported by Military.com. It follows the Navy's decision in October to end permanent shaving waivers for sailors after concluding

that facial hair can hinder the effectiveness of breathing mask and respirator seals.

Such problems have led the Army to study alternative systems and others, such as Canadian Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan, a Sikh former soldier who deployed to Afghanistan three times, to develop beard-friendly, hooded gas masks.

To qualify for laser therapy coverage outside the military medical network, service members must work in an environment where breathing protection may be required and laser therapy isn't available on base, according to the policy change, which is backdated to July 17, 2019.

Razor bumps are caused when curly hair curves back into the skin after being shaved, causing inflammation. The condition, which can be painful, affects many African Americans, ac-



COLVILLE McFEE/U.S. Air Force

An airman has his neck and face inspected during a shaving waiver course in 2018. Tricare says service members will no longer need a waiver to get laser treatments for razor bumps at a civilian facility.

cording to past studies.

The Navy estimates that of more than 337,000 sailors in its ranks, about 6,000 are treated for the condition annually.

Some sailors with the condition previously received a shaving waiver, or "no-shave chit." Under the new Navy policy, sailors are able to obtain only a temporary shaving waiver and must see a doctor every six months if the condition continues.

The Navy says treatment options include the use of medicated creams to make hair easier to shave; shaving with gentle equipment; and shaving techniques to minimize the risk of irritation

and hair reentry into the skin.

The service said in October that laser hair reduction "is the most reliable approach allowing a return to Navy grooming standards."

Laser therapy may take up to three to seven sessions to be effective, said a study published in April by the U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health.

The average cost of a laser hair removal session in 2016 was \$306, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

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Navy limits guest access to some bases after incidents

Associated Press

BANGOR, Wash. — The Navy is curtailing access to installations around the Kitsap Peninsula in Washington state following two fatal shootings and a gate crash at other bases around the country in the past month.

The Kitsap Sun reported guests of base residents, workers and military members must be vetted by security to visit the base's locations at Bremerton, Bangor, Keyport, Manchester and Naval Hospital Bremerton, according to Lonnie Collier, a spokesman. Guests will also need an escort at all times and cannot go to on-base facilities including exchanges, commissaries and chapels.

The temporary restrictions are in response to unrelated attacks earlier this month by gunmen at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Hawaii, and Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla.; in a third incident, a driver entered an exit from a base in Virginia and struck and killed a sailor.

"We take the safety of those working and living on Naval Base Kitsap very seriously," said Capt. Richard Rhinehart, base commander.

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MILITARY

As deadline passes, Kim calls for 'offensive' countermeasures

By KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The stage was set for an increase in tensions as the United States missed North Korea's end-of-year deadline to break the deadlock in nuclear talks on Tuesday amid fears the communist state plans to resume long-range missile tests.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for "offensive political, diplomatic and military countermeasures" to protect his country's security and sovereignty in a seven-hour speech on Monday, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

The communist state has threatened to adopt an unspecified "new way" if Washington fails to propose a more flexible approach to talks that have stalled over conflicting demands for sanctions relief and more extensive steps toward denuclearization.

Kim, who was also widely expected to make a New Year's speech on Wednesday, didn't mention nuclear weapons or specify the countermeasures that should be taken in his remarks to a meeting of the central committee of the ruling Workers' Party.

But he stressed the need to develop "the party into a militant party full of vitality and vigor," KCNA reported on Tuesday.

The third-generation leader also called for measures to improve the country's economy, which has been hard-hit by international sanctions.

South Korea said it was closely watching the party meeting but declined to speculate on the meaning behind Kim's words, Lee Sang-min, a spokesman for the Unification Ministry, said.

The meeting, which KCNA said was ongoing, was being closely watched for signs that Kim is preparing to abandon diplomacy with the United States in what would be a blow to a key foreign policy goal of President Donald Trump's administration.



GODFREY AMPONG/U.S. Marine Corps

Pay: Union had complained of stagnant salaries

FROM FRONT PAGE

Prior to the passage of the bill, the American Federation of Government Employees had complained that its members were earning less in 2019 than at the start of the decade because salaries had failed to keep pace with inflation. It said government agencies were struggling to recruit employees due to

noncompetitive salaries that lagged behind private sector pay.

More than 30% of federal workers are veterans, the Office of Personnel Management stated in 2017.

Last week, the OPM published the 2020 pay tables and a general salary calculator at www.opm.gov. lekic.slobodan@stripes.com

Big steps

A recruit with Bravo Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, goes down the rappel tower at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., on Monday.

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OCT 18, NOV 15, DEC 20

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MIDEAST

Taliban prisoners see peace deal as ticket to freedom

By KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

PUL-E-CHARKKHI, Afghanistan — Thousands of Taliban prisoners jailed in Afghanistan as insurgents see a peace deal being hammered out between the United States and the Taliban as their ticket to freedom.

They know a prisoner release is a key pillar of any agreement that brings an end to Afghanistan's 18-year war. Washington's longest military engagement.

A list of about 5,000 Taliban prisoners has been given to the Americans, and their release has been written into the agreement under discussion, said a Taliban official familiar with the on-again, off-again talks taking place in Qatar. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. U.S. and Afghan government officials have said a prisoner release is part of the negotiation.

But some analysts say free prisoners could undermine peace in Afghanistan.

"There's a need for Afghan and U.S. officials to do their due diligence on any Taliban prisoners they're planning to release, in order to minimize the likelihood that they'll set free jihadists that

can do destabilizing things and undercut a fledgling peace process," warned Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the U.S.-based Wilson Center.

The Associated Press interviewed more than a dozen Taliban prisoners inside the notorious Pul-e-Charkhi prison on the eastern edge of the capital, Kabul. Several of them were nostalgic for the Taliban's Afghanistan, ruled by the mighty hand of their previous leader, the warlord Mullah Mohammed Omar, who died several years ago.

But they also insisted that they accept it would not be the same now and that, though they still wanted what they call Islamic rule, they no longer call for some of their strict edicts, like the ban on education and on girls and women working.

On Sunday, the Taliban ruling council agreed to a temporary cease-fire in Afghanistan, providing a window in which a peace agreement with the U.S. can be signed, Taliban officials said. They didn't say when it would begin.

The Taliban have well-organized communication networks inside Afghan prisons that record the latest arrests, province



RAHMAT GUL/AP

Jailed Taliban are seen inside the Pul-e-Charkhi jail in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Dec. 14. Thousands of Taliban prisoners see a peace deal as their ticket to freedom.

by province, as well as who is sick and who has died. It all gets delivered to a prisoners' commission, devoted to their release and headed by Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, who during the Taliban rule served as justice minister and the "virtue and vice" minister of religious police.

Built in the 1970s to house 5,000 prisoners, Pul-e-Charkhi now has 10,500 prisoners, according to the warden, Akhtar Noorzai.

The around 3,000 prisoners classified as Taliban are in their own block.

The prisoners had free rein in a room where they could mingle, pray and study. The room was lined with small desks at which the Taliban sat on the carpeted floor in traditional style.

The AP interviewed the prisoners in a nearby room, unshackled

and with no guards or administrators present. The prisoners decided among themselves who among them would be interviewed, without interference — at least none visible — from the administration.

Maulvi Niaz Mohammad emerged as the leader among the prisoners, although no one identified him as such. He was sentenced to 15 years. During the Taliban rule, he served with Qari Ahmadullah, a Taliban intelligence commander who controlled much of northern Afghanistan.

He said barely 1,000 of the prisoners in the block are actually Taliban. The rest were accused of being sympathizers or members of the group, often to settle old scores; others were criminals.

Analysts and even the United States' own Special Inspector

General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John F. Sopko said neither Afghanistan nor the U.S. is ready for the Taliban prisoners' release.

Every past attempt at reintegration has been costly and a failure.

A report released in September — one of several "Lessons Learned" treatises done by Sopko's team during America's 18-year and \$1 trillion involvement in Afghanistan — said Afghans on both sides of the conflict need to avoid the missteps of the past.

Sopko said Congress should consider funding reintegration only if a peace deal provides a framework for reintegrating ex-combatants, there is strong monitoring of the process and violence is dramatically reduced.

Embassy: More troops being sent to protect compound; no evacuations planned

FROM FRONT PAGE

There were no reports of casualties, but the unprecedented breach was one of the worst attacks on the embassy in memory. It followed deadly U.S. airstrikes on Sunday that killed 25 fighters of the Iran-backed militia in Iraq, the Kataeb Hezbollah. The U.S. military said the airstrikes were in retaliation for last week's killing of an American contractor in a rocket attack on an Iraqi military base that it had blamed on the militia.

President Donald Trump blamed Iran for the embassy breach and called on Iraq to protect the diplomatic mission.

"Iran killed an American contractor, wounding many. We strongly respond and always will. Now Iran is orchestrating an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq. They will be held fully responsible. In addition, we expect Iraq to use its forces to protect the Embassy, and so notified!" he tweeted from his estate in Palm Beach, Fla.

By early evening, protesters had set up tents outside the embassy where they said they intended to stage a sit-in. Dozens



ROBERT GAVALDON/U.S. Marine Corps

Marines prepare to deploy from Kuwait in support of a crisis response mission Tuesday after Iraqis stormed the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

of yellow flags belonging to Iranian-backed Shiites fluttered atop the reception area and were plastered along the embassy's concrete wall along with anti-U.S. graffiti.

Trump, who is spending the holiday week at his Florida home, is in "close touch" and receiving regular updates from his na-

tional security team, said White House press secretary Stephanie Grishman.

The U.S. will send more troops to protect the embassy compound and does not plan an evacuation, the Pentagon and State Department said.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said the U.S. has taken actions to

"ensure the safety of American citizens, military personnel and diplomats" and to "ensure our right of self-defense. We are sending additional forces to support our personnel at the Embassy."

The extra force will consist of a small additional detachment of Marine security guards, two defense officials in Washington said. They would be from the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group, which is trained specifically to provide security at U.S. diplomatic missions. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to be identified.

"U.S. personnel are secure," added an official from the State Department. "There are no plans to evacuate Embassy Baghdad."

The developments represent a major downturn in Iraq-U.S. relations that could further undermine U.S. influence in the region and also weaken Washington's hand in its maximum pressure campaign against Iran.

Iraq has long struggled to balance its ties with the U.S. and Iran, both allies of the Iraqi government. But the government's angry reaction to the U.S. airstrikes and its apparent decision not to pre-

vent the protesters from reaching the embassy signaled a sharp deterioration of U.S.-Iraq relations.

A video obtained by the AP showed militiamen trashing the embassy's reception area and also taking away paperwork.

Multiple officials told the AP that the U.S. ambassador was already traveling outside Iraq before the attack on the compound.

The U.S. airstrikes and the subsequent call by the militia for retaliation represent a new escalation in the proxy war between the U.S. and Iran playing out in the Middle East.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Sunday's strikes send the message that the U.S. will not tolerate actions by Iran that jeopardize American lives.

The U.S. military said "precision defensive strikes" were conducted against five sites of Kataeb Hezbollah, or Hezbollah Brigades, in Iraq and Syria. The group, which is a separate force from the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, operates under the umbrella of the state-sanctioned militias known collectively as the Popular Mobilization Forces. Many of them are supported by Iran.

NATION

Anti-robocall law should slow flow

Associated Press

NEW YORK — An anti-robocalls measure signed into law Monday by President Donald Trump should help reduce the torrent of unwanted calls promising lower interest rates or pretending to be the IRS, though it won't make all such calls disappear.

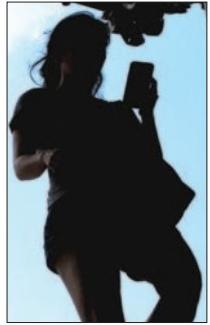
The new law gives authorities more enforcement powers and could speed up measures the industry is already taking to identify robocalls. And when phone companies block robocalls, they must do so without charging consumers. That should help Americans dodge many of these annoying calls.

"American families deserve control over their communications, and this legislation will update our laws and regulations to stiffen penalties, increase transparency and enhance government collaboration to stop unwanted solicitation," White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

The law is a "big victory," said Consumer Reports' Maureen Mahoney. "The key is requiring these phone companies to help stop the calls before they reach the consumer and do it at no additional charge."

The robocall problem has exploded because cheap software makes it easy to make mass calls. Americans collectively get billions of robocalls each month.

Such calls have disrupted operations at hospitals by diverting staff time to deal with calls faked to look as though they are coming from inside the hospital.



STEVEN SENNER/AP

An anti-robocalls measure signed Monday by President Donald Trump gives authorities more enforcement powers.

Scams conducted through such calls have also defrauded people out of millions of dollars. Many people now avoid answering calls altogether if they come from unknown numbers.

Another important step is getting rid of "spoofed" numbers, or when a scammer fakes Caller ID to look like it's coming from the same area code or an important government agency like the IRS. The industry is developing a system to tell people when the Caller ID number is real. The new law requires all phone companies to put this system in place.

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Omar's small-dollar fundraising haul sparks inquiry from FEC

BY TOREY VAN OOT
(Minneapolis) Star Tribune

The Federal Election Commission has asked for more detail about thousands of donors to Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., who gave less than \$200 each, a group of contributors who poured more than \$800,000 into her reelection bid over a three-month period.

Agency staff sent a letter to Omar's campaign in late November seeking more information about the large share of cash from individuals giving \$200 or less — the maximum allowed before triggering donor disclosure requirements — in her latest quarterly filing. Such contributions accounted for more than 75% of the \$1.1 million Omar re-

ported raising between July and September.

The letter, sent Nov. 26, asked Omar to either amend the filing to identify any donors who exceeded the threshold or affirm that all \$833,961.64 in unitemized contributions came from individuals who gave less than \$200 over the course of the year. Failure to respond, the agency added, could result in an audit or enforcement action.

Omar's campaign responded to the agency in a letter sent last week, saying the committee is aware of the limits and "endeavors to fully comply" with the law. The response, signed by campaign treasurer Kate Wittenstein, adds that contribution tracking software used by the committee

"flags and aggregates such contributions according."

"If for any reason the Committee were to identify any clerical or other reporting errors the Committee will, of course, amend accordingly," Wittenstein wrote.

Omar's campaign had previously said it received contributions from 55,577 donors in the third quarter of 2019, with an average donation of \$14.55. More than 99% of contributions received during the period were under \$200, the campaign said at the time of the October filing.

An FEC spokeswoman confirmed receipt of the letter and said staff could follow up with the committee if they have additional questions or need clarification.



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NATION

Trump: Dems avoiding trial to protect Bidens

By JOHN WAGNER
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Tuesday accused Democrats of seeking to avoid an impeachment trial in the Senate to protect Joe Biden and his son Hunter, whose service on the board of a Ukrainian energy company while his father was vice president has come under scrutiny.

Trump weighed in on Twitter as an impasse continued over the timing and scope of an expected Senate trial. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has held back the two articles of impeachment — abuse of power and obstruction of Congress — passed this month by the House.

She and Senate Democrats are seeking guarantees that a Senate trial will include several witnesses, notably acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney and former national security adviser John Bolton, who declined to participate in the House impeachment proceedings. Democrats also are pushing for the release of documents relevant to Trump's conduct toward Ukraine that the White House has refused to provide.

"The Democrats will do anything to avoid a trial in the Senate in order to protect Sleepy Joe Biden, and expose the millions and millions of dollars that 'Where's' Hunter, & possibly Joe, were paid by companies and countries for doing NOTHING," Trump said in his tweet. "Joe wants no part of this mess!"

While records suggest that Hunter Biden was paid lucratively for his service on the board of the Burisma energy company, no evidence has emerged of any wrongdoing. There has also been no evidence that Joe Biden, now a Democratic presidential candidate, was paid in connection with his son's service on the board. As

Buttigieg: Wouldn't want son on Ukrainian board

Associated Press

FORT MADISON, Iowa — Pete Buttigieg says he "would not have wanted to see" his son serving on the board of a Ukrainian natural gas company while he was leading anti-corruption efforts in the country, an implicit criticism of the controversy that has snared his 2020 Democratic presidential rival Joe Biden.

Hunter Biden's position on the board of the company Burisma has been a rallying point for Republicans as they try to defend President Donald Trump against impeachment charges. Trump, asking Ukraine's new president to investigate the former vice president and his son while also withholding crucial U.S. military aid.

Buttigieg, the childless

mayor of South Bend, Ind., said in an Associated Press interview Monday that his administration would "do everything we can to prevent even the appearance of a conflict. That's very important because as we see it can create a lot of complications even when there is no wrongdoing."

Still, he insisted that the issues raised about Hunter Biden and his father by Trump and his defenders are a diversionary tactic.

"So, I would not have wanted to see that happen," Buttigieg said when asked how he would have handled a situation like Biden's. "And at the same time, again, I think this is being used to divert attention from what's really at stake in the impeachment process. There's been no allegation, let alone finding of any kind of wrongdoing."

part of his duties as vice president, Joe Biden was heavily involved in U.S. policy toward Ukraine.

As Trump tweeted from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, on New Year's Eve, it remained unclear when a trial might start in the Republican-led Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is insisting that senators hear opening statements by House impeachment managers and lawyers for Trump before deciding whether to allow either side to call witnesses. McConnell has also indicated that it would be fine with him if Pelosi never transmits the articles of impeachment and a trial is not held.

Senate Minority Leader Charles

Schumer, D-N.Y., continued to push his party's case for calling witnesses late Monday night.

"So far, neither Senator McConnell nor any Republican Senator has articulated a single good reason why the trial shouldn't have the witnesses or the documents we requested," he said in a tweet. "The American people deserve to know the truth."

Lawmakers are scheduled to return to Washington next week.

Democrats have argued that the issue of the Bidens' involvement in Ukraine is irrelevant to the question of whether Trump abused his power when he asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to launch an investigation into the Bidens.



CHERYL SENTER/AP

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., takes questions from the audience in Newport, N.H., on Sunday. His doctors say he has recovered from his recent heart attack and is fit enough to continue campaigning and serve if elected.

Doctors: Sanders is fit enough for presidency

By WILL WEISSERT
AND LAURAN NEERGAARD
Associated Press

Bernie Sanders suffered "modest heart muscle damage" during his recent heart attack but has since recovered well and is fit enough for the rigors of the presidential campaign trail and the White House should he win it, according to letters released Monday by his primary care physician and two cardiologists.

The 78-year-old Vermont senator is the oldest candidate in the 2020 presidential race and had vowed to release detailed medical records by the end of the year. His campaign did so the day before New Year's Eve, and the letters provide the most detail it has given to date showing that Sanders received prompt treatment to reopen his clogged artery with stents following his heart attack, which occurred while he campaigned in Las Vegas on Oct. 1.

After a first heart attack, standard questions include the likelihood of another and whether the heart's muscle was damaged badly enough to trigger later heart failure. While his heart was dam-

aged, Sanders has had no other symptoms, his blood pressure and heart rate are "in optimal ranges," and his heart is functioning normally, with the ability to exercise "well above average," wrote his cardiologist, Dr. Martin LeWinter, of the University of Vermont Medical Center.

The key test to show that was a treadmill exercise test in which doctors watch for signs of trouble during strong exertion. Sanders' exercise capacity this month was "average" for a healthy man his age without heart disease, and he was able to exercise to a level about 50% higher than men his age who do have heart disease, University of Vermont cardiac rehabilitation chief Dr. Phillip Aedes and exercise physiologist Patrick Savage wrote in a separate letter.

"At this point, I see no reason he cannot continue campaigning without limitation and, should he be elected, I am confident he has the mental and physical stamina to fully undertake the rigors of the presidency," LeWinter wrote, also noting that Sanders had made an "uneventful" recovery from his heart attack.

Biden is asked about sharing 2020 ticket with Republican

By HUNTER WOODALL
Associated Press

EXETER, N.H. — Former Vice President Joe Biden entertained the idea of choosing a Republican as a 2020 running mate as he campaigned Monday — though he conceded he didn't have anyone specific in mind.

A voter told Biden during an event Monday afternoon in Exeter that her son had wondered if the Democratic presidential contender would consider choosing a Republican as a running mate.

"The answer is, I would, but I can't think of one now," Biden said as the crowd laughed.

Biden went on to say there are "some really decent Republicans that are out there still," before adding that "they've got to step up."

At the start of Monday's event, Biden reminded voters his goal is to unite the country.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden takes a selfie during a campaign stop in Exeter, N.H., on Monday. When asked, Biden said he would consider a Republican as a running mate.

"I refuse to accept the proposition that we'll be in a state of perpetual war with Republicans, because you can't govern the country if that's the case," Biden said. "We are a democracy, and our democracy depends upon consensus. We have to be able to pull the country together."

Biden is sometimes asked about possible running mates by voters on the campaign trail. During his answer Monday he noted that it was presumptuous to talk about the idea at this point in the campaign.

If he becomes the Democratic nominee, Biden said, he'd want to pick someone "sympatico" with him and his priorities, telling voters there are "a lot of qualified women," and "a lot of qualified African Americans."

"There's a plethora of really qualified people," Biden said.

NATION

In 2019, Florida leads way in weird news

BY TAMARA LUSH
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG — In 2019, Florida Banana managed to eclipse Florida Man. From alligator antics to naked people doing wacky things, Florida did not disappoint in the weird news department this year.

(So. Many. Naked. People.)

In December, a Miami couple spent more than \$100,000 on the "unicorn of the art world" — a banana duct-taped to a wall — during Art Basel. The piece was widely copied and mocked on social media, and then someone at the art fair ripped it off the wall and ate it.

Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan sold three editions of "Comedian," each in the \$12,000 to \$150,000 range.

"We are acutely aware of the blatant absurdity of the fact that 'Comedian' is an otherwise inexpensive and perishable piece of produce and a couple inches of duct tape," one couple that purchased the banana said. "Ultimately, we sense that Cattelan's banana will become an iconic historical object."

Florida is known for many things. Sunshine, beaches and oranges. The magic of Disney and the glamour of South Beach. It's also known for having the most bananas news in the United States.

As they often do, alligators topped the list of odd stories. Perhaps the most visually interesting happened in October, when Paul Bedard, who is contracted with the state's nuisance alligator program, responded to a call of a gator in a swimming pool in Parkland. Bedard "played" with the 8-foot long reptile until it became tired. Then he lifted it out of the water and held it over his head for an Instagram photo.

"I haven't had a good-sized gator in a swimming pool in probably a year, so I was kind of looking forward to this when I got the call," he said. The alligator was relocated to a wildlife park.

Humans tangled with gators



PAUL BEDARD/AP

Paul Bedard raises a 9-foot alligator over his head at a home in Parkland, Fla., in October.



SIOBHAN MORRISSEY/AP

Gallery owner Emmanuel Perrotin poses next to Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan's "Comedian" at the Art Basel exhibition in Miami Beach, Fla., earlier this month. The work sold for \$120,000.



JESSICA ELDRIDGE/AP

Patrick Eldridge's Smart car is seen parked in his kitchen in Jacksonville, Fla., in September. Eldridge was trying to protect the car from Hurricane Dorian.

in a multitude of other ways. One reptile knocked on a woman's door the night before Thanksgiving in Fort Myers. In Martin County, two men poured Coors beer into an alligator's mouth. They were arrested.

Alligators weren't the only animals making headlines in Florida. In August, a restaurant in Stuart canceled its "Monkey Mondays" when a 9-month-old capuchin named JoJo bit a child's finger.

Also in August, a Lake Worth Beach man began feeding a kin-kajou (a raccoon relative with a prehensile tail that's native to Central and South America), but

one day, it attacked his leg. "It was not a nice kin-kajou. It was super aggressive," the man's girlfriend told The Palm Beach Post.

And a Labrador retriever somehow got behind the wheel of a car and did doughnuts in Port St. Lucie.

Some claim Florida's weird news surfaces because of the state's open public records law, while others chalk it up to the fact that it's the third-largest state, with more than 21 million people packed on a peninsula — many wearing scant clothing because of infernal heat most of the year.

Whatever the reason, taking

stock of the year's strange stories in Florida is a time-honored tradition. This year's no different, because the unusual is met with a chuckle and shrug precisely because it's so normal. (Honestly. In 1986, the state's official tourism slogan was "Florida ... The Rules Are Different Here").

Consider Patrick Eldridge, of Jacksonville, who parked his tiny Smart Car in his kitchen because he was worried it would blow away during Hurricane Dorian.

The owners of a Port Orange funeral home gave away a free cremation as part of its grand reopening.

A toilet exploded in Port Charlotte when lightning struck the home's septic tank. No one was injured, and homeowner Marylou Ward expressed relief: "I'm just glad none of us were on the toilet."

Folks attacked one another with all manner of items, including (but not limited to) pancake batter, Pop-Tarts, a fake Christmas tree, swords, McDonald's condiment packets and roach spray.

In the city of Port Richey, two mayors were arrested in the span of 20 days — one on charges of obstruction of justice; the other on allegations he was practicing medicine without a license in his home.

Lest you think all Floridians are strange, a few did some remarkably kind things.

Chicago Bears linebacker Khalil Mack went to his hometown of Fort Pierce and stopped by a Walmart store in December. He paid off all the layaways, to the tune of \$80,000, according to the Chicago Tribune.

A Florida 9-year-old gave his third grade teacher all the feels when he offered his \$15 of birthday money as a solution to the problem of teachers being underpaid.

But it's the weird that attracts the most attention here. A number of people were nude, or partially nude, when they made the news.

In Polk County in December, a Florida man was "buck naked" when he showed up to the front door of a home where an undercover sex sting operation was being conducted, sheriff's officials said. A naked Florida man burglarized an elementary school in Apopka and spread feces throughout the building. Ops chased a lot of naked people through parking lots, swamps and stores, too many to list here.

In Miami in March, motorists captured on camera a nearly nude man wearing hot pink socks, sneakers, skimpy underwear and a pink headband, bicycling backward down I-95.

As one does.

Forest ecologist helps refashion Barbie dolls as scientists

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — When Nalini Nadkarni was a kid, she'd run home from school, climb into one of the eight maple trees in her parents' backyard and spend an afternoon there with an apple and a book.

That time in the treetops set the tone for the rest of her life. She's now a forest ecologist at the University of Utah who dedicates her career to studying rain forest canopies.

She's also always looking for new ways to get people interested in science, from fashion made with nature imagery to science lectures at the state prison. "I've tried for years and years to bring the science I do and understand to people outside of academia," she said.

Her childhood memories made her particularly interested in reaching children. After her own 6-year-old daughter asked for a Barbie, Nadkarni decided to refashion the iconic

dolls as a scientist-explorer in rubber boots rather than high heels.

"Lots of girls, and some little boys, love Barbie," Nadkarni said. "It's almost aspirational; they want to be Barbie."

That was about 15 years ago. Nadkarni said Barbie-maker Mattel wasn't interested in the idea then, so she decided to redo dolls herself, using gear she collected. She scoured thrift stores and eBay for Barbie dolls and enlisted help from volunteer seamstresses. She called the creation "Treetop Barbie" and began selling them at cost on her website.

Last year, Mattel began working with National Geographic to create a new line of scientific Barbies. Nadkarni has a long-standing relationship with National Geographic, so when the nonprofit reached out for help, she quickly agreed.

Nadkarni joined a team of female scientists advising Mattel as it made the line of dolls

that includes a marine biologist, astrophysicist, photojournalist, conservationist and entomologist.

Sales began in the summer. As a thank-you, Mattel sent Nadkarni a one-of-a-kind doll with tree-climbing gear and full dark hair woven with strands of white that made the doll resemble the scientist.

For Nadkarni, the company's investment in the dolls reflects a broader cultural shift toward recognizing women in science, math and technology that could spark an appreciation for science even among kids who don't end up entering the field.

Mattel said in a statement that the purpose of Barbie dolls for the last 60 years has been to "inspire the limitless potential in every girl," pointing out that Barbie was portrayed in other science and math-based careers long before the new line.



RICK BOWMER/AP

Nalini Nadkarni holds a Barbie created to look like her in Salt Lake City earlier this month.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

BIG BUOY MISSING FOR 2 YEARS HAS BEACHED

FL NEWSMYRNA BEACH — A big red navigation buoy that bounced along Atlantic waves for two years has beached in Florida, where it's drawing attention.

Crowds of spectators streamed to New Smyrna Beach for a close-up view and some pictures with the buoy navigational marker that some described as "the size of a truck," news outlets reported.

The beacon came from South Carolina and was displaced since 2017, said Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Dickinson, spokesman for the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville.

The Coast Guard plans to bring in a crane sometime this week to remove the buoy.

OFFICIALS REMOVE BEAR FROM CAMPUS STADIUM

TN KNOXVILLE — A 200-pound black bear showed up as a walk-on at the University of Tennessee's baseball stadium but ended up being sent back to its home territory.

A UT police officer notified the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, saying the bear had been wandering around campus and got stuck inside Lindsey Nelson Stadium, according to a post on the agency's official Facebook page.

Sgt. Roy Smith and Wildlife Officer Jeff Roberson were able to tranquilize and remove the bear with the help of UT police.

The officers released the bear into the Foothills Wildlife Management Area in Blount County.

Couple returns to Dunkin' to take wows

MA WORCESTER — A Massachusetts couple reunited for extra-sweet wedding vows at the same Dunkin' Donuts where their young love splintered nearly 30 years ago.

Valerie Sneed and Jason Roy were joined by family, friends and customers buying coffee and pastries at a Dunkin' Donuts in Worcester.

Sneed and Roy mostly didn't see each other for 25 years after a conversation about their future at the same shop in 1992 led the young, in-love couple to step back from their relationship.

When Roy learned Sneed was performing a Valentine's Day-themed musical revue in Worcester in February 2018, he showed up and sat in the front row. Roy proposed that New Year's Eve.

Workers help woman who mouthed 'help me'

CA SAN FRANCISCO — Workers at a McDonald's in northern California helped rescue a woman who mouthed the words "help me" as she pulled up to the drive-thru window.

The woman initially entered the restaurant asking employees to call 911 and urging them to hide her from a reportedly violent man, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.



ERIN BORMETT, THE (SIOUX FALLS, S.D.) ARGUS LEADER/AP

Chasing snowballs

Atlas jumps for a snowball in Zach Dysart's hand on Sunday at Spencer Park in Sioux Falls, S.D. The rain and snow Sunday brought the year's precipitation total to 39.27 inches, breaking the previous record of 39.17 inches set last year.

THE CENSUS

5 The number of mountain lion attacks on dogs in a central Idaho community in a week. The Idaho State Journal reported a Labrador retriever was attacked near Hailey after its owners let the dog outside in their unfenced backyard. It marked the fifth case in the Wood River Valley in the span of a week, according to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The Labrador has since recovered and returned home, but at least three other dogs have died.

got stuck in a ditch.

Fish and Game, state police and local rescue crews used an ATV and snowmobile to fetch the family members. Authorities used a special ATV and winch to free the vehicle.

Creamery fined for dumping milk into river

NH CRAWFORD'S PURCHASE — A family was stranded for nearly seven hours in northern New Hampshire after their minivan got stuck on a snowmobile trail.

Two adults and five children from Burlington, Mass., were trying to get from the Bretton Woods ski area to a hotel when their vehicle's GPS directed them to a seasonal road that is open only to snowmobile traffic in winter, according to the New Hampshire Fish and Game department.

The driver, Dattu Prajapat, 45, ignored posted signs about the road closure and continued for several miles before turning around, authorities said. The minivan then slid off the road and

The creamery discharged 87 gallons of condensed skim milk and 384 pounds of milk solids into a storm drain that leads to a tributary of the South Yambhill River on Jan. 5, the environmental quality department said.

The creamery discharged milk into the same drain June 25, which turned the creek white for

recording of her future son-in-law proposing to her daughter apparently missed the moment.

She ended up recording a selfie on her reaction to what she was seeing.

KOB-TV reported Susan Griego somehow took a selfie video of herself watching as Benjamin Steele Bacon proposed to her daughter. She did capture the moment Bacon popped the question to Amber Griego by the penguin exhibit at the Albuquerque Biopark. Her mother admitted she's probably "not very good at photography."

Art helps city celebrate 150 years in 2020

MS TUPELO — A city in northeast Mississippi made a bold statement to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

An art piece consisting of three big red numbers — 1, 5 and 0 — was installed at a park near City Hall in downtown Tupelo. Each is 12 feet tall.

Tupelo was incorporated on July 20, 1870. The city is planning a sesquicentennial celebration on July 20, 2020.

Tupelo Convention and Visitors Bureau Director Neal McCoy said the big numbers will remain in the park through December 2020 before moving to the permanent location at the Oren Dunn City Museum.

From wire reports

OH CHARDON — Another Ohio library is moving to a fine-free system, becoming part of a national trend of dropping fines to eliminate barriers to library access.

The Geauga County Public Library in northeastern Ohio eliminated overdue fines beginning Wednesday except for telescopes, new video games and Blu-Ray DVDs, The News-Herald reported.

Rather than amassing fines, borrowers will have their cards blocked 21 days after the due date. Returning the overdue items unlocks the card.

Mom takes selfie instead of recording proposal

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A future mother-in-law tasked with making a phone

FACES

'Cats' set to lose at least \$70 million

Los Angeles Times

Universal Pictures is bracing to lose at least \$70 million after its critically panned movie "Cats" bombed over the holidays, according to a person close to the project.

"Cats" has drawn just \$38.3 million globally so far, including \$17.8 million in the U.S. and Canada, according to Box Office Mojo — a disaster for a big holiday movie based on the Andrew Lloyd Webber hit musical.

The studio expects domestic box office sales to reach at least \$30 million, after production costs of about \$100 million and close to the same amount in marketing costs, according to estimates from those close to the project who were not authorized to comment.

Such losses are a painful reminder of the risky film business and further evidence of the challenges studios face drawing in audiences to theaters, even for features with such as stars as Taylor Swift, Jennifer Hudson and Idris Elba.

Even though this year has set new records for individual movies, it has also delivered other flops, including STX Entertainment's "Playmobil: The Movie" and Warner Bros.' "The Goldfinch."

However unlike other misfires from 2019 such as Fox's X-Men saga "Dark Phoenix" or Paramount's "Terminator: Dark Fate," "Cats" isn't tied to a larger franchise that would be the basis for future sequels and spinoffs.

After "Cats" was released on Dec. 20, executives expressed hope that the movie would eventually reach its target audience during the holidays.

"The story isn't necessarily over on how 'Cats' is going to play domestically," said Jim Orr, president of domestic distribution at Universal Pictures. "This audience group doesn't necessarily rush out on opening weekend."

A loss of \$70 million for Universal would not rank among Hollywood's biggest write-offs, which include a \$200 million hit taken by Disney in 2012 for the movie "John Carter."

One rival executive privately pointed to Universal Pictures' release strategy, such as its choice of trailers that became a laughingstock on social media. A person close to the project cited Oscar-winning director Tom Hooper's last-minute tinkering with the film.

The studio also had to revise the movie to fix special effects snafus, such as the appearance of Jedi Dench's hand in one scene.

After "The Rise of Skywalker" and "Little Women," 2019 is closing the year out at \$11.23 billion in the U.S. and Canada, down 4.4% from last year's record levels, according to Comscore. That's despite massive hits from Disney, including "Avengers: Endgame," the highest-grossing global title ever (not adjusting for inflation), "Lion King" and "Frozen 2."



'Murder Mystery,' 'Stranger Things' most popular on Netflix in 2019

Bloomberg

Netflix, touting the success of its original programming, said the most popular releases on its streaming service in 2019 were things it produced: the comedy movie "Murder Mystery" and the third season of its 1980s sci-fi show "Stranger Things."

The company on Monday disclosed lists of its top 10 programs in 33 countries, offering the most expansive report to date of what is being watched on the world's most popular online TV network.

Netflix's "6 Underground," the Michael Bay-directed action movie, and its monster-hunting fantasy "The Witcher" also drew large U.S. audiences.

Netflix, which once filled its service with shows and movies from other studios, is now relying more than ever on its own programming to keep viewers loyal. Partners such as Walt Disney Co. are taking back their properties to feed their own streaming services. Disney's platform launched in November, and ones from Comcast Corp.'s NBCUniversal and AT&T Inc.'s WarnerMedia are due in coming months.

Netflix still relied on some Disney material to fill out its lineup in 2019. In fact, "Incredibles 2," the animated movie from Disney's Pixar unit, was Netflix's third-most-popular new film for the year.

The data is both revealing and limited. No outside party verified the lists, which Netflix based on viewership in the first 28 days after a show was released. The numbers count people who watched at least two minutes of a program, and Netflix relied on projections to calculate the popularity of shows and movies that were just released in December.

Because Netflix has provided so little data over the years, the lists offer some rare insight into what works on the service.

Netflix's original movies and shows dominated across every category in both the U.S. and abroad. "Murder Mystery," which stars Adam Sandler and Jennifer Aniston, was the No. 1 program in nine countries, including Australia and Colombia.

More 'Surviving' to come

This time, R. Kelly will be in jail when docuseries airs

BY MARK KENNEDY

Associated Press

Few TV documentary series can boast having a more powerful real-world impact than "Surviving R. Kelly."

Though allegations of sexual abuse against minors followed R&B superstar R. Kelly for years, it was a six-part series aired by Lifetime last January featuring testimonials by alleged survivors that sparked new attention from authorities.

A year later, Lifetime is readying a follow-up series, "Surviving R. Kelly Part II: The Reckoning," with one major difference: this time, R. Kelly will be behind bars when it airs.

Brie Miranda Bryant, senior vice president of unscripted development at Lifetime, said the new series takes a wider and deeper look at some of the issues the first one raised. The first had 54 interviews; the follow-up has almost 70.

"It's not really about R. Kelly. It's about sexual violence against women in general and how we change that dialogue," she said.

"Surviving R. Kelly Part II: The Reckoning" will premiere Jan. 2, 2 stateside on Lifetime. The six-hour series will run for two hours a night for three consecutive nights.

The new series includes interviews with two alleged survivors who haven't spoken out publicly before and includes Tiffany Hawkins, the first alleged survivor who filed sexual charges. Other new voices include music executive Damon Dash, Beyoncé's father Mathew Knowles, lawyer Gloria Allred and Illinois prosecutor Kimberly Foxx.

One new voice is Jimmy Maynes, a veteran artist manager and former Jive Record executive who represents artists including Salt-N-Pepa. That groundbreaking hip-hop group toured with R. Kelly and Maynes was initially approached by the documentary makers about what he witnessed on the road.

"I had not physically seen R. Kelly with any underage children, however I did feel like there was a high probability that things had been going on behind closed doors that I would not have appreciated," Maynes said.

Lifetime plans a follow-up series to its 2019 six-parter on musician R. Kelly, shown leaving a Chicago courthouse June 6. The new series is "Surviving R. Kelly Part II: The Reckoning."

AMR ALFIK/WAP

While not a direct witness, Maynes does talk about being asked by Jive Records in 2002 to go to Chicago and buy up all the VHS and DVDs he could find that allegedly showed R. Kelly engaging in sexual acts with an underage girl. He said he later confronted the superstar, who claimed the man in the video was his twin brother. He has no twin.

Maynes also offers a critical look at the music industry, which he argues creates a culture that gives superstars like R. Kelly unquestioned authority. He hopes the music industry learns to reform itself and not surround its stars with enablers. "R. Kelly was responsible for keeping the lights on at the label. There's a particular amount of manipulation that goes with that territory. So I think the music industry should hold some responsibility," he said.

An estimated 26 million people saw all or some of the original Lifetime documentary series that brought together dozens of people who accused the singer of sexual misconduct and kidnapping.

The series faced backlash and finger-pointing. Some blamed the music industry. Some blamed the media and law enforcement for ignoring the alleged conduct because the victims were black women. Some blamed the parents of the alleged victims for not doing enough.

"It just felt like a ton of finger-pointing without real answers. We wanted to be able to answer those questions as best as possible," Bryant said.

Kelly, 52, is currently in jail, scheduled to stand trial in Cook County in September, then in federal court in Chicago in April and again in federal court in New York in February.

Kelly has denied all the allegations related to sexual assault with minors, but the #MeToo movement has damaged his financial stability. He did himself few favors when he portrayed himself as a victim in a combative interview with Gayle King in which he pounded his chest and yelled into the camera.

Bryant said the indictments against R. Kelly were never the goal of the series. She said some alleged survivors want restorative justice, some want apologies. "Justice looks like a lot of different things for a lot of people," she said.

Frequent Monty Python collaborator Innes dies

Comedic writer and actor Neil Innes, who created a Beatles parody group called the Rutles and frequently worked with the members of Monty Python, died Sunday night of natural causes at age 75, his agent, Nigel Morton, said.

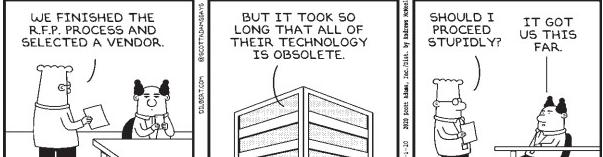
Innes was such a frequent collaborator of the Monty Python troupe that he sometimes was called the "seventh Python." A musician as well as a writer, he wrote songs for the popular film "Monty Python And The Holy Grail," appeared in "Life of Brian" and toured the U.K. and Canada with the group.

From The Associated Press

Frazz



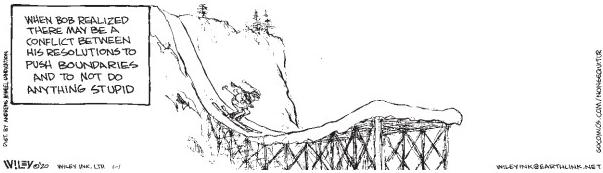
Dilbert



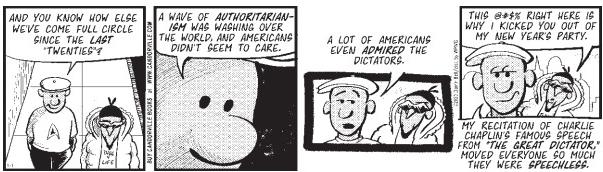
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



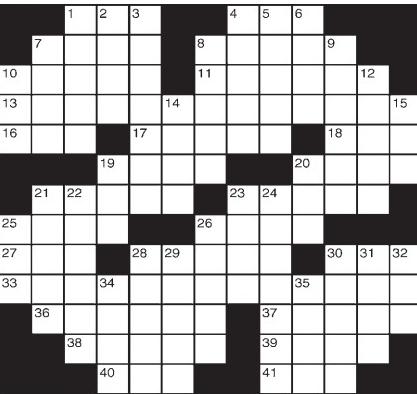
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro

**Eugene Sheffer Crossword****ACROSS**

- 1 Grazing land
4 Danson of "Cheers"
7 "Breaking Bad" actress Anna
8 Bit of gossip
10 James Bond portrayer Daniel
11 Martini garnishes
13 Perfume variety
16 Ambulance initials
17 Grating
18 Actor McShane
19 Bloke
20 Incite
21 Gulf War missiles
23 Binge
25 Stadium cheers
26 Songs for one
27 Equal (Pref.)
28 Very small
30 Historic time
33 Roy Orbison hit
36 "Queen of Soul" Franklin
37 Alpha's opposite
38 In progress
39 Rowboat needs
- 19 Gloomy guy
20 Swiss canton
21 Malia's sister
22 "Quantum Healing" author Deepak

DOWN

- 1 Waikiki wingdings
2 Oklahoma city
3 Ticked off
4 Dutch bloom
5 Poet Dickinson
6 Peace symbol
7 Metric measure
8 Perch
9 Go to bed
10 Middling grade
12 Play place
14 Catches some rays
15 Away from WSW
16 Ambulance initials
17 Grating
18 Actor McShane
19 Bloke
20 Incite
21 Gulf War missiles
23 Binge
25 Stadium cheers
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36 "Queen of Soul" Franklin
37 Alpha's opposite
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- 19 Gloomy guy
20 Swiss canton
21 Malia's sister
22 "Quantum Healing" author Deepak

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	P	E	C	M	C	S	Z	U	L	U
L	O	C	H	O	O	H	I	S	U	S
A	R	U	R	T	R	U	M	P	E	T
T	R	U	S	T	E	D	E	L	D	E
U	S	T	E	D	E	L	D	E	D	E

1-1**CRYPTOQUIP**

F J L R W X U K L Y W R X S L Y R X T J L S F
 S B X S O N M R X I N I U O
 J T N R M T L S B T N M A B
 J B X T K X R W F S F : J T L F R T W J S W N I
 T M A F .

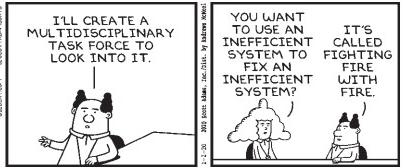
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SICK FOLKS RECEIVE TREATMENT INSTRUCTIONS FROM DOCTORS, YOU MIGHT SAY THEY ARE ILL ADVISED.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals C

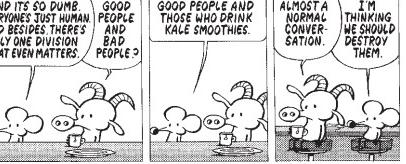
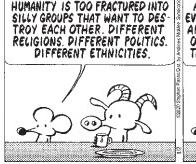
Frazz



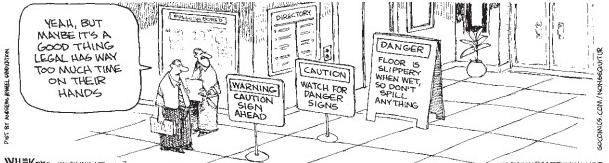
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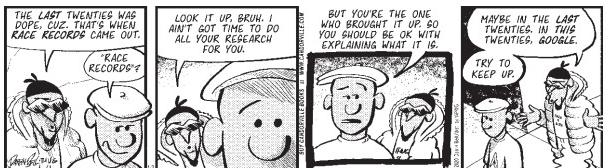
Pearls Before Swine



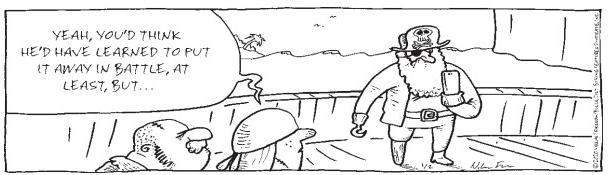
Non Sequitur



Candorville



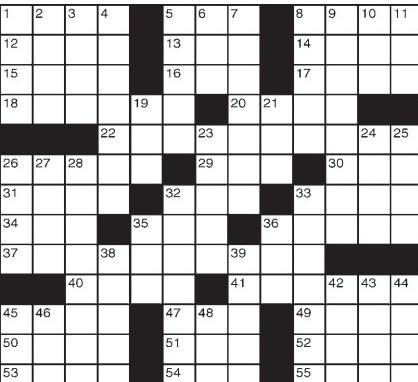
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro

**Eugene Sheffer Crossword****ACROSS**

- 1 Papa's mate
5 Designer
Claiborne
8 Not many
12 Bedouin
13 Inventor Whitney
14 Deep cut
15 Has a bug
16 Solidity
17 Division word
18 Rum cocktail
20 "Damn Yankees" vamp
22 Wife of Louis XVI
26 Unspoken
29 Managerie
30 Charged bit
31 Flair
32 Heavy weight
33 Kilt wearer
34 R-V link
35 Harry Potter pal
36 Green sauce
37 Shadowy outline
40 Antelope's playmate
41 Art props
45 Olympian queen
47 Savings plan acronym
49 With (Fr.)
50 Borodin's "Prince —"
51 Polite address

DOWN

- 1 Polite address
2 La Scala solo
3 Niger's neighbor
4 Refrain (from)
5 On the up and up
6 — de-France
7 Ginormous number
8 Limber
9 Enthusiasts
10 Superlative suffix
11 One of the five W's
19 Picnic crasher

Answer to Previous Puzzle

1-2

CRYPTOQUIP

MDNYFGD H VHGEHXD PYJJHIU
RI VRRPG, H LRGSEC PHIU
VRRPMDEEG. CDG, H'L JPDSSC

HI-XIRNX-FRFG.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SPECIAL MEDICATED CARPETS THAT YOU CAN ONLY PROCURE THROUGH PHARMACISTS: PRESCRIPTION RUGS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals B


STARS AND STRIPES
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Who will win the 2020 election? Don't ask.

By DOYLE McMANUS

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON

Ten months ago, I gave readers of this column an early preview of the race for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Keep an eye on the new faces, I sagely advised: Sens. Kamala Harris, of California; Cory Booker, of New Jersey; and Sherrod Brown, of Ohio, plus former Rep. Beto O'Rourke, of Texas.

Sorry about that. Despite a fawning cover story in Vanity Fair, O'Rourke flamed out fast. Harris staged an impressive launch, but then fell to earth. Brown never entered the race. Only Booker is still running, and his campaign is on life support.

Next time I recommend a hot technology stock or a soon-to-be-famous restaurant, ignore the tip.

At the end of each year, I look back at my columns to see what I got wrong — and what, if anything, I got right.

It's a humbling exercise but a useful one. Unlike politicians, journalists are duty-bound to admit their errors in public — not just the small ones, like misspelled names, but big ones, too. You can't learn from mistakes if you don't acknowledge them.

And there's one easy way to get things wrong in a presidential campaign: by trying to forecast the outcome.

It's almost impossible to resist the temptation. Answering "beats me" never impresses anyone, even though it's often the most accurate response.

We surround our forecasts with caveats — "the race is wide open," "early polls don't mean much" — and give the customers what they want: not predictions, exactly, but our best guesses as to where the campaign is going. But primary campaigns are notoriously unpredictable. At

this point in the 2008 campaign, Rudy Giuliani led polls for the Republican nomination. Four years later, Newt Gingrich led the GOP polls. Neither won.

In early 2019, to my conventional wisdom-addicted brain, Joe Biden appeared to be a commanding candidate if he survived controversies over his past positions on school desegregation, crime laws and the invasion of Iraq. But Biden's real problem wasn't his historical baggage; it was his tendency to sound like a 20th-century candidate lost in a 21st-century debate.

I recently wrote that Biden still tops national polls because so many Democrats think he's the most electable of their candidates. But this time I hedged, noting that the perception could change overnight if Biden is shelledack in Iowa and New Hampshire.

I didn't see Pete Buttigieg coming. The 37-year-old gay mayor of a small city? Inconceivable. I thought, Iowa voters may shortly prove me wrong.

I did see Elizabeth Warren coming. Her focus on plans to make the economy work better for the middle class was effective. I wrote. Then Warren stumbled on health care. When she belatedly offered a plan, it proposed a government-run health insurance system, but only after a long transition period. That seemed smart, I wrote. It's not clear that voters agree.

To be fair, I did get some things right.

I figured out that the controversies over Biden's verbal gaffes were a polite proxy for questions about his age. He'll be 78 on Inauguration Day; is he up to the job?

I noted that most Democratic voters aren't Bernie Sanders-style socialists, and that the progressive "litmus tests" that dominated early months of the campaign — "Medicare for All," the Green New Deal and abolishing the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency — weren't a

sure path to winning primaries.

And I got some things right on the other big political story of the year: the impeachment of President Donald Trump.

I wrote last February that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, of California, and her Democrats were heading in that direction.

"Call this phase 'pre-impeachment,'" I wrote. "Pelosi and her committee chairs, all Democrats, are doing what they need to do to make impeaching Trump possible."

They were mostly just waiting for an impeachable offense to come along. Once it did, in the form of Trump's self-incriminating telephone call with the president of Ukraine, readers should not have been surprised that the Democrats moved as quickly as they did.

It's easy to forecast the likely verdict of an impeachment trial in the Senate. With 53 Republicans on the jury, Trump is in little danger of conviction. The tougher question is what impact impeachment will have on the presidential election. Trump says he thinks it will help him. I wrote that it could help the Democrats instead.

David Axelrod, President Barack Obama's former adviser, thinks it won't have much impact — that by November, voters will have largely forgotten a trial that happened in January. He's probably right.

Campaign reporting is at its best when we investigate the candidates, their histories and their proposals, and when we talk to voters to learn what they think. We're at our worst when we make forecasts without warning how fallible we are.

In 2020, I hope you'll return to this column for the reporting, the analysis and the occasional insight. Just don't ask me who's going to win.

Doyle McManus is a Washington columnist for the Los Angeles Times and director of the journalism program at Georgetown University.

Why electric cars still don't live up to the hype

By CHARLES LANE

The Washington Post

With a new decade starting shortly, it's time for conscientious columnists to undergo their self-administered decennial performance reviews.

I'll start — and try to keep it focused. For the past 10 years, I've waged a quixotic counteroffensive against electric-car boosterism, raining skepticism on the vehicles' potential to cure climate change, much less be the clean, green wave of the transportation future. More than a few people (my Tesla-owner friends very much included) have questioned this fixation, and I freely admit it's an odd one. I just figured that someone in an otherwise credulous press had to sort through the cloud of wishful thinking, political rhetoric and sheer commercial hype surrounding this subject, and it might as well be me.

Mass adoption of electric cars, however, cannot occur unless they can do everything gas-powered vehicles can do — including the ability to go hundreds of miles before refueling, and refueling easily — at a comparable total cost of ownership. Otherwise, electric cars will be a niche product for upper-income folks. And government subsidies for them will be a regressive transfer of social resources in return for little climate benefit, given that the U.S. power grid the cars draw from is 64% fueled by coal and gas.

Nothing happened in the past decade to undermine this basic critique. Government, both federal and state, subsidized electric-car sales and production to the tune of several billion dollars, yet as of March 2019, there were 1.18 mil-

lion electric vehicles on the road in the United States — less than one-half of 1% of the total. Households earning \$100,000 or more per year own two-thirds of EVs, with many of the owners benefiting from a \$7,500 federal tax credit.

Globally, electric-car adoption is also modest relative to optimistic forecasts. Of the 86 million cars sold in the top 54 world markets in 2018, 1.26 million or 1.5% were EVs. That's nowhere near then-Nissan chief executive Carlos Ghosn's 2010 prognosis that EVs would account for 10% of global sales by 2020.

My biggest error, in hindsight, was to underestimate the financial staying power of Elon Musk's cash-burning Tesla Motors, which I thought would exhaust investors' patience long before it conquered the complexities of mass-producing quality vehicles. Tesla's Model 3 is the most popular electric car on the market, with 111,000 sold in the nine months of 2019. Owners swear by it.

Tesla's survival, though, may be the exception that proves the rule. (And we'll see how it does now that Congress has allowed that tax credit to lapse.) Ballyhooed startups such as Coda, THINK and Fisker all went bankrupt before 2015 — Fisker after defaulting on an Energy Department loan at an ultimate cost to taxpayers of \$139 million. Chevrolet discontinued its Volt, a plug-in hybrid, in 2019 after selling only about 150,000 since the car launched in 2011. That same year, President Barack Obama had set a goal of having 1 million plug-in vehicles on the road by 2015.

But wait. What about recent reports that Volkswagen is making big new investments in electric? Or Ford's announcement of a new all-electric Mustang crossover? GM,

Chevy's parent company, says it, too, is preparing a new generation of EVs.

Established manufacturers are indeed about to ramp up electric offerings, providing Tesla with its most serious competition yet. They are doing so, however, more as a response to regulatory pressure from governments — even after the Trump administration scaled back fuel economy standards — than as a response to demonstrated customer demand, which lately has favored gas-powered SUVs and pickups.

The problem, as industry leaders acknowledge in their quieter moments, is still the same: getting the total cost of owning an EV down to that of a gas equivalent. There's uncertainty about key variables such as how much more battery costs will fall and the global supply of rare-earth elements.

GM President Mark Reuss recently wrote that EV-gas cost parity may happen "within a decade." Honda CEO Takahiro Hachigo told Automotive News Europe, "I do not believe there will be a dramatic increase in demand for battery vehicles, and I believe this situation is truly global."

A mid-2018 report by JPMorgan Asset Management noted that the median global forecast by industry experts is 125 million EVs on the road worldwide by 2030, which would be less than 10% of the total. "I'm taking the 'under' rather than the 'over,'" the report's author, Michael Cembalest, added.

Me too. Let's reconvene in 10 years to see who wins that wager, and to assess the true costs and benefits of the bet that big government and big business have placed on the electric car.

Washington Post editorial writer/columnist Charles Lane specializes in economic and fiscal policy.

SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

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Deals

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL American League

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Agreed to terms with LHP Dallas Keuchel on a three-year contract.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Designated INF Richard Urena or assignment. Agreed to terms with INF Travis Shaw on a one-year contract.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Signed OF Kolten Wong to a two-year contract.

DETROIT TIGERS — Signed CBA with Matt Moore.

National Basketball Association

NBA — Fired Golden State Warriors F Matt Barnes.

Xavier Musketeers G Luke Doncic to the floor.

ATLANTA HAWKS — Transferred F Charlie Brown Jr. from College Park (NBAGL).

FOOTBALL

National Football League

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Signed CB S Sofi Shelton and Duke Thomas, WRs Johnnie Dixon and A.J. Richardson, OLs Sam Darnold and Matt Peart, and WR Ryan Winkler to reserve/future contracts.

CHICAGO BEARS — Signed OLs Dino Boyd, DE Xavier Crawford, WR Reggie Davis, Stephen Denmark, WR Thomas Ivens, S Sam Mustipher, T Dax Raymond, LBs Jordan Davis and Matt Wilcox, and WR Alex Wesley to reserve/future contracts.

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Claimed QB Matt Barkley from the Browns.

Signed TE Moritz Boecking and WRs DaMarkus Lodge to reserve/future contracts.

CLEVELAND BROWNS — Signed DT Brandin Bryant, CB Dannie Lewis Jr., WR J'Mon Moore, DE Trevor Young, LBs Jerome Baker and Matt Johnson, and WRs Sipapa Tagoe, G Cadee Tucker and P Matt Wille to reserve/future contracts.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Signed WR Victor Bolden, WR Jonathan Duhart, LS James Fisher, P Jack Fox, S AJ Howard, WR Tom Kempton, OL Matt Nelson, OL Ben Segapati, LB Christian Jones, G Caleb Kuper and T P Matt Wille to reserve/future contracts.

MONTGOMERY COLTS — Signed TE Mo Ali-Cox, K Chad McLaughlin and WR Zach Pachal to one-year contracts.

Signed CBs Mike Guglielmino and safeties Coach Tony Odem.

NEW YORK GIANTS — Fired coach Pat Shurmur.

OAKLAND RAIDERS — Signed G Richie Incognito to a two-year contract extension. Signed DE Ade Aruna, DL Jordan Brodeur, OLs Matt Kalil and Matt Kalil, C Eric Magnuson and WR Anthony Ratliff-Williams to reserve/future contracts.

WASHINGTON REDSKINS — Fired team president Bruce Allen. Signed P Brett Tannenbaum and WRs DeSean Jackson and T Paul Adams. DE Ryan Bales, WR Emanuel Hall, DE Cameron Malveaux and WR Jordan Yeast to reserve/future contracts.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

ANAHIM DUCKS — Signed RW Daniel Sprong from San Diego (AHL).

ARIZONA COYOTES — Recalled F Michael Ferland from Tucson (AHL).

BUFFALO SABRES — Signed LW Dalton Smith.

DETROIT REDWINGS — Assumed G Calvin Pickard to Grand Rapids (AHL).

NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Signed D Nikita Okhotin to a three-year, entry-level contract.

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING — Reassigned F Mathieu Joseph to Syracuse (AHL). Acquired D Ryan McDonagh from the Anaheim Ducks for F Chris Martin.

ORLANDO CITY — Signed D Antonio Carlos and a one-year loan from Palmeiras (Brazil).

COLLEGE

OHIO STATE — Announced RB JK Dobkins is leaving school early to enter the NFL draft.

UNIVERSITY OF CHILE — Signed G Mario Diaz and Major Soccer

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NFL

Jaguars keep Marrone, Caldwell despite losses

BY MARK LONG
Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Jacksonville Jaguars are retaining coach Doug Marrone and general manager Dave Caldwell despite consecutive losing seasons.

Owner Shad Khan made the announcement Tuesday after "positive meetings" with Marrone, Caldwell, their staffs and several players.

"This is not the time to consider an overhaul of our organization," Khan said.

Marrone and Caldwell have two years remaining on their contracts, and Khan made it clear that expectations are high for 2020.

Jacksonville has two first-round draft picks, Nos. 9 and 20 overall, to help rebuild a roster that lacks talent and depth. Rookies Gardner Minshew, Josh Allen and Jawaun Taylor are a few of the building blocks in place for Marrone and Caldwell moving forward.

But there are plenty of holes, especially if the Jaguars part ways with several expensive veterans to create salary cap space.

Khan fired top executive Tom Coughlin two weeks ago, identifying the old-school coach's overbearing ways as the main problem. Coughlin's heavy-handed approach upset players, with cornerback Jalen Ramsey forcing his trade to the Los

Angeles Rams, as well as some assistants. Coughlin had difficulty making the transition from the sideline to the front office.

Coughlin's position as executive vice president of football operations will not be filled. Marrone and Caldwell will report directly to Khan.

"I want to see what we produce under a new organizational structure in 2020," Khan said. "Goals have been established. Accountability will be paramount."

Khan expressed his disappointment with the team's 6-10 season. Jacksonville was 4-4 and in the hunt in the AFC South before losing five straight and falling out of playoff contention. The Jags responded by losing all five by at least 17 points.

Marrone is 23-28 in three seasons, including 11-21 following a trip to the 2017 AFC title game. Marrone has expressed his frustration with the roster, much of which Coughlin put together, but knows there are enough pieces in place to be more competitive. Jacksonville lost seven games by double digits this season.

The slide began in the offseason. The Jaguars had to cut several good players, including defensive tackle Malik Jackson and safety Tashaun Gipson, after botching the quarterback position again. Caldwell chose Blake Bortles with the third overall pick in the 2014 draft, and even though the quarterback showed more struggles than



STEPHEN B. MORTON/AP

Jaguars head coach Doug Marrone directs his players against the Colts during Sunday's game in Jacksonville, Fla. Marrone will remain the team's coach next season.

strides, Caldwell and Coughlin gave him a three-year extension worth \$54 million.

Jacksonville released Bortles in March, leaving the team with a \$16.5 million dead-money hit on the 2019 salary cap, and signed former Super Bowl MVP Nick Foles to a four-year, \$88 million deal.

Foles broke his left collarbone in the opener, missed eight games and was

benched in his third game back. Minshew was one of several bright spots, going 6-6 in 12 starts and becoming just the 14th rookie in NFL history — and first drafted after the fourth round — to throw at least 20 touchdowns passes.

But the Jaguars have significant holes at tight end, receiver, linebacker, safety and defensive tackle.

Top Scores for Week 17

56	gbpack	Europe
55	Songtanpack	Pacific
54	jeanfontenot	United States
52	Lek-cellent	Pacific
51	cowboy48	United States
49	KINGKAPP	Pacific
47	sxela	United States
45	Tnewell99	Europe
44	PurplePeopleEaters	Pacific
43	Park Avenue	Europe

STARS & STRIPES.
NFL CHALLENGE

HALL OF FAME



Top 10 Overall Scores

1428	gbpack	Europe
1417	PurplePeopleEaters	Pacific
1395	Park Avenue	Europe
1393	jeanfontenot	United States
1387	KILRDRIVR	United States
1386	820th Horseman	Middle East
1382	armyduude1212	Pacific
1371	cowboy48	United States
1369	gohrownies43	Europe
1368	scober75	United States

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING

NBA/NHL



MATT MARTON/AP

Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo, left, shoots over Chicago Bulls forward Lauri Markkanen. Antetokounmpo had 23 points and 10 rebounds in the Bucks' 123-102 win at Chicago.

NBA roundup

Antetokounmpo backs Bucks' win over Bulls

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Giannis Antetokounmpo had 23 points and 10 rebounds after missing two games with a sore back, and the Milwaukee Bucks pulled away in the second half for a 123-102 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Monday night.

Antetokounmpo, the NBA's second-leading scorer with an average of 30.5 points per game entering this one, played only 27 minutes and sat out the final 5½ because of the lopsided score. He was 8-for-14 from the field with six assists.

Khris Middleton scored 25 points for the Bucks and Eric Bledsoe had 15 points in 16 minutes after missing the previous eight games with a fractured right leg. Milwaukee improved to a league-best 30-5.

Zach LaVine scored 19 points for the Bulls but shot just 7-for-23 from the field.

Wizards 123, Heat 105: Jordan McRae scored a season-high 29 points, Garrison Mathews had a career-high 28 and Ian Mahinmi added a career-best 25 as depleted Washington beat visiting Miami.

With the Wizards (10-22) minus All-Star shooting guard Bradley Beal and five other key members of their rotation, they got huge contributions from an unexpected trio. McRae, a third-year player, Mathews, in his 11th NBA game, and Mahinmi, a 13-year veteran, enjoyed nights to remember against the Heat (24-9), which had its five-game winning

streak snapped. The Heat entered with the second-best record in the East and lost for just the third time in 20 games against conference opponents.

Suns 122, Trail Blazers 116: Devin Booker scored 33 points, Kelly Oubre Jr. had 29 and Phoenix rallied to win at Portland.

After trailing by 19, the Suns roared back to win their second consecutive game and hand the Trail Blazers their fourth straight defeat.

Jazz 104, Pistons 81: Donovan Mitchell scored 23 points and Jordan Clarkson added 20 to lead host Utah over Detroit.

Rudy Gobert added 13 points and 19 rebounds for the surging Jazz, and Bojan Bogdanovic scored 17. Utah won for the eighth time in nine games.

Timberwolves 122, Nets 115 (OT): Shabazz Napier scored a season-high 24 points, Jarrett Culver added 21 and short-handed Minnesota rallied past visiting Brooklyn in overtime.

The Timberwolves had lost 12 of 13 and were again without injured Karl-Anthon Towns and ill Andrew Wiggins. Gorgui Dieng started in Towns' place and had 11 points and 20 rebounds.

Hawks 101, Magic 93: Brandon Goodwin scored 21 points, Kevin Huerter added 19 and Atlanta won at Orlando to end a 10-game skid.

Playing without injured guard Trae Young (ankle) for the second straight game, the Hawks trailed by 18 during the first half but rallied in the third quarter.

Playing without injured guard

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	22	8	.733	—
Philadelphia	23	12	.657	1½
Brooklyn	16	16	.500	1½
New York	9	24	.273	14½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	9	72	.117	—
Orlando	14	59	.204	10
Charlotte	13	62	.187	12
Atlanta	10	57	.167	13½
Atlanta	7	27	.206	17½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	30	5	.857	—
Indiana	21	15	.636	8
Detroit	12	22	.353	17½
Cleveland	10	22	.313	18½

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	22	11	.667	—
Dallas	21	15	.563	1½
San Antonio	18	19	.419	8
Memphis	13	21	.382	9½
New Orleans	11	23	.304	11½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	23	9	.719	—
Oklahoma City	21	13	.625	2½
Oklahoma City	17	15	.531	6
Portland	14	20	.412	10
Portland	12	20	.375	11

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	23	11	.678	—
Phoenix	13	20	.394	13
Sacramento	12	21	.364	9
Golden State	9	24	.267	17½

Sunday's games

Oklahoma City 98, Memphis 97

New Orleans 127, Houston 112

Denver 120, Sacramento 115

Portland 120, Golden State 105

Utah 104, Detroit 101

Phoenix 122, Portland 116

Boston 103, Charlotte 98

Philadelphia at Indiana 104

Cleveland at Toronto 104

Denver at Houston 102

Brooklyn at Dallas 100

Dallas at Oklahoma City 107

Wednesday's games

Orlando at Boston 102

Portland at New York 105

Minnesota at Milwaukee 104

Phoenix at Los Angeles 103

Thursday's games

Charlotte at Cleveland 106

Philadelphia at Indiana 104

Toronto at Miami 103

Golden State at Minnesota 104

Brooklyn at Dallas 103

Oklahoma City at San Antonio 104

Phoenix at L.A. Clippers 102

Friday's games

Charlotte at Cleveland 106

Philadelphia at Indiana 104

Toronto at Miami 103

Golden State at Minnesota 104

Brooklyn at Dallas 103

Oklahoma City at San Antonio 104

Phoenix at L.A. Clippers 102

Saturday's games

Charlotte at Cleveland 106

Philadelphia at Indiana 104

Toronto at Miami 103

Golden State at Minnesota 104

Brooklyn at Dallas 103

Oklahoma City at San Antonio 104

Phoenix at L.A. Clippers 102

Friday's games

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Phoenix at L.A. Clippers 102

Friday's games

Charlotte at Cleveland 106

Philadelphia at Indiana 104

Toronto

YEAR IN REVIEW

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Leonard led the way in the NBA with his big play

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

He was the Fun Guy. The board man who got paid. He overcame injury to reclaim his rightful place as one of the very best basketball players on the planet. He conquered the NBA world for a second time, bringing a championship to Canada. And then he joined the Los Angeles Clippers, ready to start anew.

"What it do, baby?"

For Kawhi Leonard in 2019, there finally is an answer to his infamous question: He did everything, without talking much.

Leonard is The Associated Press' male athlete of the year for 2019, comfortably winning a vote by AP member sports editors and AP beat writers. He becomes the fifth NBA player to win the award, joining Larry Bird (1986), three-time recipient Michael Jordan (1991 through 1993), three-time recipient LeBron James (2013, 2016, 2018) and Stephen Curry (2015). The award has been made annually since 1931, and Simone Biles was announced Thursday as the women's recipient for 2019.

Leonard was the NBA Finals MVP for the second time, leading Toronto to its first championship — five years after he first smudged his fingerprints on both trophies with the San Antonio Spurs. He wound up leaving the Raptors in the summer for the Clippers, returning to his native Southern California and turning the historically woeful franchise into one of the top teams in the league.

"The ride was fun," Leonard said early this month on his return trip to Toronto, summing up his year with the Raptors. "I had a great time."

By now, it's no secret that Leonard is a man of few words.

He is not a man of few accomplishments.

He received more than twice as many points in the balloting as any of the other 18 vote-getters. Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson was second, followed by Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes, tennis star Rafael Nadal and reigning NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks.

"Kawhi's pretty steady," said San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich, Leonard's former coach with the Spurs. "He's not a big talker. He doesn't try to find the lime-

Voting totals

Athlete	Pts
Kawhi Leonard	42
Lamar Jackson	19
Patrick Mahomes	17
Rafael Nadal	16
Giannis Antetokounmpo	15
Tom Brady	13
Brooks Koepka	12
Zion Williamson	9
Kyle Busch	8
Caelle Dressel	6
Joe Burrow	5
Lionel Messi	5
Pieter-Steph du Toit	3
Stephen Strasburg	2
Mike Trout	2
Novak Djokovic	2
Lewis Hamilton	1
Rory McIlroy	1
Mohamed Salah	1

light or anything like that. He's just a good guy who wanted to be good."

Somewhere along the way, he became great.

Leonard was the best player in last season's playoffs, after a regular season where he missed 22 games mostly because of what has become known as "load management" — the fancy term used on nights when he would sit out to rest. Leonard missed most of the 2017-18 season with the Spurs because of a complicated leg issue, and the NBA said last month that he is still dealing with an ongoing injury to the patella tendon in his left knee."

He was limping at times in the playoffs, but it didn't matter. He averaged 30.5 points and 9.1 rebounds in the postseason, his 732 points in last year's playoffs ranking as the third-most in any NBA playoff year. In the biggest times, he came up the biggest — 15 points in the fourth quarter to carry Toronto past Milwaukee in the series-winning Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals, and 17 points in the fourth quarter of Game 4 of the NBA Finals against Golden State to put the Raptors on the cusp of the title.

And, of course, he made The Shot: the four-bounce-off-the-rim, at-the-buzzer jump shot from the corner to beat Philadelphia in Game 7 of the second round.

"Without a doubt," Raptors coach Nick Nurse mused during the playoff run, "the best thing about this thing is that somehow I wound up on the sideline getting to watch this guy play up close."

During the playoffs, Leonard's "I'm a fun guy" quote that he offered on his arrival in Toronto



FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Toronto Raptors forward Kawhi Leonard, center, celebrates his game-winning basket as time expired at the end of an NBA Eastern Conference semifinal basketball game against the Philadelphia 76ers. Leonard helped the Raptors win the NBA title, his second championship.

"It's not about me being famous or wanting to have more fame than those guys. It's about me playing basketball and having fun on the floor."

Kawhi Leonard

On winning the NBA title with the Toronto Raptors, then signing with the Clippers



DARREN ABATE/AP

Leonard performed at that lofty level even while dealing with a major distraction. During the NBA Finals, it was revealed that Leonard filed a federal lawsuit against Nike and claimed the footwear and apparel giant was blocking him from using a logo that he believes he owns.

"There's a lot of guys that are like, 'Look, I'm going to find a way to win and in a seven-game series I'm going to get the best of you in the end,'" said Miami's Jimmy Butler, who was with Philadelphia last season and saw up-close what makes Leonard tick. "But he's definitely up there. Your respect just grows. Push, pull, whatever he's got to do ... He's going to find a way."

During the playoffs, Leonard's "I'm a fun guy" quote that he offered on his arrival in Toronto

Leonard left the Raptors in the summer for the Los Angeles Clippers, returning to his native Southern California and turning the franchise into one of the top teams in the league.

YEAR IN REVIEW

FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Greatest gymnast – it's a Simone thing

By WILL GRAVES

Associated Press

They're called "Simone Things," a catchall phrase for the casual ease with which Simone Biles seems to soar through her sport and her life.

The irony, of course, is that there's nothing casual or easy about it. The greatest gymnast of all time and 2019 Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year only makes it seem that way.

Those jaw-dropping routines that are rewriting her sport's code of points and redefining what can be done on the competition floor? Borne from a mix of natural talent, hard work and a splash of ego.

The 25 world championship medals, the most by any gymnast ever? The result of a promise the 22-year-old made to herself when she returned to competition in 2017 after taking time off following her golden run at the 2016 Olympics.

The stoicism and grace she has shown in becoming an advocate for survivors — herself included — and an agent for change in the wake of the Larry Nassar sexual abuse scandal that's shaken USA Gymnastics to its core? The by-product of a conscious decision to embrace the immense clout she carries.

"I realize now with the platform I have, it will be powerful if I speak up and speak for what I believe in," Biles said. "It's an honor to speak for those that are less fortunate. So if I can be a voice for them in a positive manner; then of course I'm going to do whatever I can."

And it's that mission — combined with her otherworldly skill and boundless charisma — that's enabled Biles to keep gymnastics in the spotlight, a rarity for a sport that typically retreats into the background once the Olympic flame goes out. She is the first gymnast to be named AP Female Athlete of the Year twice and the first to do it in a non-Olympic year.

Biles edged U.S. women's soccer star Megan Rapinoe in a vote by AP member sports editors and AP beat writers. Skiing star Mikaela Shiffrin placed third, with WNBA MVP Elena Delle Donne fourth. Biles captured the award in 2016 following a showstopping performance at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, where she won five medals in all, four of them gold. She spent most of the following 12 months taking a break before returning to the gym in the fall of 2017, saying she owed it to herself to mine the depth of her talent.

Cheek social media following one of her routines and you'll find people — from LeBron James to Michelle Obama to Chrissy Teigen — struggling to distill what they've witnessed in 280 characters or fewer, with whatever

PHOTOS BY CHARLIE RIEDEL (TOP) AND MARIAN MURAT (BOTTOM)/AP



Above: Simone Biles practices on the vault for the senior women's competition at the 2019 U.S. Gymnastics Championships in Kansas City, Mo. Below: She won five gold medals at the Gymnastics World Championships this year in Stuttgart, Germany. She is the first gymnast to win the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year award twice and the first to win it in a non-Olympic year.

they settle on typically followed by multiple exclamation points and a goat emoji, a nod to Biles being considered the Greatest Of All Time.

Her triple-twisting double-flip (the "triple double") at the end of her first tumbling pass on floor exercise is a wondrous blur. Her double-twisting double-flip beam dismount (the "double double") is so tough the International Gymnastics Federation made the unusual decision to downplay its value in an effort to deter other gymnasts from even trying it.

This is the blessing and the

curse of making the nearly impossible look fantalizing attainable. When Biles learned about the FIG's decision, she vented on Twitter, her palpable frustration highlighting the realness she's maintained even as her first name has become synonymous with her sport's royalty.

It can lead to a bit of a balancing act. In some ways, she's still the kid from Texas who just wants to hang out with her boyfriend and her dog and go to the grocery store without being bothered. In other ways, she's trying to be respectful of the world she's built.



Voting totals

Athlete	Pts
Simone Biles	66
Megan Rapinoe	60
Mikaela Shiffrin	26
Elena Delle Donne	12
Ash Barty	6
Sifan Hassan	4
Sabrina Ionescu	3
Sheri-Ann Fraser-Pryce	3
Jin-Young Ko	1
Amanda Nunes	1
Simone Manuel	1

The moment went viral, as most things surrounding her do.

"I'm starting to realize it's not just the gymnastics anymore," Biles said, using the term for her sport's dedicated fans. "It's an overall thing. It's weird to get that kind of attention, but at the end of the day, I feel gymnastics has been overlooked in non-Olympic years. Yeah, it puts pressure on me. But I'm not trying to think about all the attention from the outside world."

The attention figures to only grow in the run-up to Tokyo, where she will attempt to become the first female gymnast in more than half a century to repeat as Olympic champion. Her smiling face serves as the exclamation point at the end of every television promo for the Summer Games.

Let it be known: The smile is real. That might not have always been the case, but is is now. Heading into the final months of a singular career, she is trying to revel in the journey while anxiously awaiting what's next. Add it to the list of Simone Things.

"I feel like this is the beginning of my life and I don't want gymnastics to be my whole entire life," she said. "I'm definitely going to soak in the moment and enjoy it so 10 years from now I can look back and say 'I had the time of my life out there' ... rather than 'I was good, but I was miserable.'"

YEAR IN REVIEW

Karma had hand in feel-good moments

By JIM LITKE
Associated Press

Karma had a career year in 2019. She draped a green jacket on Tiger Woods, handed soccer's World Cup to a tough-as-nails U.S. Women's National Team, shipped the NBA's Larry O'Brien Trophy to a cool-as-they-come rookie coach and players from the Great White North, righted a wrong that happened a quarter-mile from the finish line at the Kentucky Derby, and turned a baseball tribute to a fallen teammate into something truly unforgettable.

So if sports didn't make you smile at least once in the past 12 months, well, that's probably on you.

Here are the top five feel-good stories of 2019 (and one honorable mention):

■ Fourteen years after his last Masters win and 11 years after his last major, after fighting through chronic back problems, multiple surgeries, a bout with painkillers and long after just about everybody had written him off, Woods claimed his fifth green jacket in April.

"It's overwhelming, just because of what's transpired," he said afterward. "It's unreal for me to experience this."

His win was called the "greatest comeback in sports," and "the feel-good story of the century."

But it might not even have been the most karmic moment in golf in 2019.

(Honorable mention) At the Phoenix Open in late January, PGA Tour pro Gary Woodland helped Amy Bockerstette, a community college golfer with Down Syndrome, finish off one of the most heartwarming pars golf has ever seen. At the U.S. Open in June at Pebble Beach, he borrowed her mantra — "I've got this" — en route to the biggest win of his career.

Playing with Woodland in front of a big practice-day crowd, Bockerstette sensed he was more nervous than she was. So before each shot, she put Woodland at ease with the words she repeats when tackling their other challenges: "I've got this."

Five months later, with Woodland lead-



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Angels center fielder Mike Trout gestures toward a photo of Tyler Skaggs in center field prior to a game against the Detroit Tigers, in Anaheim, Calif., on July 29. Skaggs passed away on July 1. "We're always going to be thinking about him," Trout said.

ing the U.S. Open after three rounds, Bockerstette did it again. Woodland said Bockerstette's tweet the night before the final round helped make a difference this time.

"Amy told me a million times when we were on that hole, 'I've got this, I've got this,'" Woodland recalled after his win. "And I told myself that a million times today, 'I've got this.'"

■ The U.S. National Women's Team hardly needed reassuring. If anything, captain Megan Rapinoe and her teammates were deemed too brash as they galvanized across France in pursuit of their third World Cup — and second in a row. Along the way, they sparred with President Trump over politics and highlighted a gender-discrimination lawsuit against their own federation in a fight for recognition and equal pay.

They scored 13 goals against lowly Thailand in a group-stage match and caught flak for celebrating too much. They re-

sponded by celebrating subsequent tallies with snarky goal claps and tea-time toasts, remaining ruthless until the final whistle in a 2-0 championship-game win over the Netherlands.

"We've done exactly what we set out to do, done exactly what we wanted to do, said what we voice," said Rapinoe. "I know sometimes my voice is louder, but everybody is in this together."

■ The Toronto Raptors, on the other hand, weren't marked for greatness until that moment in Game 7 of a playoff series against Philadelphia, when Kawhi Leonard's buzzer-beating, fadeaway jumper bounced four times on the rim before capping a 92-90 win.

Lucky not, the Raptors turned that break into a title. They outlasted Milwaukee in the Eastern Conference final and riding Leonard's masterful performances on both ends of the floor, ended the Golden State Warriors' dynastic dreams in six games.

■ A drenching rainstorm turned the

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Scoreboard

Bowl schedule

Friday, Dec. 20	Florida Bowl
Buffalo 31, Charlotte 9	
Frisco (Texas) Bowl	
Kent State 34, Middle Tennessee 21	
Saturday, Dec. 21	Celebration Bowl
NC A&T 63, Florida A&M 44	New Mexico Bowl
San Diego State 48, Central Michigan 11	
Georgia Southern 24	
Liberty 23, Georgia Southern 16	
Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl	
FAU 52, Stephen F. Austin 14	
Carmelina Bowl	
Arkansas State 34, FIU 26	
Washington 38, Boise State 7	New Orleans Bowl
Appalachian State 41, UAB 17	
Mondays, Dec. 23	Gasparilla Bowl
UCF 48, Memphis 35	
Tuesday, Dec. 24	Hawaiian Bowl
Hawaii 38, BYU 34	
Thursday, Dec. 26	Independence Bowl
Louisiana Tech 33, Oklahoma 20	
Quick Lane Bowl	
Pittsburgh 34, Eastern Michigan 30	
North Carolina 55, Temple 13	Military Bowl
Michigan 27, Wake Forest 21	
Texas Bowl	
Texas A&M 35, Oklahoma State 21	Holiday Bowl
Iowa 49, Southern Cal 24	
Texas 49, Southern Cal 24	
Air Force 31, Washington State 21	Atlanta
Saturday, Dec. 28	
Camden (N.J.) Bowl	
Orlando, Fla.	
Notre Dame 33, Iowa 20	Cotton Classic
Cornell 27, Texas 21	Arlington, Texas
Penn State 53, Memphis 39	
State Farm Bowl	
LSU 63, Oklahoma 20	Atlanta
Fiesta Bowl	
Glenarden, Ariz.	
Clemson 20, Ohio State 22	
Monday, Dec. 30	
SERVPRO First Responder Bowl	
Western Kentucky 23, Western Michigan 20	
Music City Bowl	
Nashville, Tenn.	
Louisville 38, Mississippi State 28	
Santa Clara, Calif.	
California 35, Illinois 20	
Orange Bowl	
Miami Gardens, Fla.	
Florida 36, Virginia 28	
Tuesday, Dec. 31	
Bowl	
Charlotte, N.C.	
Kentucky 73, Virginia Tech (8-4)	St. Paul
Arizona 20, Texas 16	
Florida State 38, Mississippi State 7-5	
Liberate Bowl	
Memphis, Tenn.	
Kansas State 34, Arizona 29	
Arizona Bowl	
Tucson, Ariz.	
Wyoming (7-6) vs. Mississippi State (7-5)	
Alamo Bowl	
San Antonio	
Texas (7-5) vs. Mississippi State (7-5)	
Wednesday, Jan. 1	
Citrus Bowl	
Orlando, Fla.	
Michigan (9-3) vs. Alabama (10-2)	
Outback Bowl	
Minnesota (10-2) vs. Auburn (9-3)	
Rose Bowl	
Pasadena, Calif.	
Oregon (11-2) vs. Wisconsin (10-3)	
Sugar Bowl	
New Orleans	
Georgia (11-2) vs. Baylor (11-2)	
Thursday, Jan. 2	
Brimley Bowl	
Baton Rouge, La.	
Cincinnati (10-3) vs. Boston College (6-6)	
Gator Bowl	
Jacksonville, Fla.	
Indiana (8-4) vs. Tennessee (7-5)	
Friday, Jan. 3	
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl	
Boise	
Ohio (6-6) vs. Nevada (7-5)	
Saturday, Jan. 4	
Armed Forces Bowl	
Fort Worth, Texas	
Southern Methodist 27, Tulane (6-6)	
Monday, Jan. 6	
Lemmerdeyke Bowl	
Morgan Hill, Calif.	
Miami (Ohio) (8-5) vs. Louisiana-Lafayette (10-3)	
Monday, Jan. 13	
College Football Championship	
New Orleans	
Clemson (14-0) vs. LSU (14-0)	
Saturday, Jan. 18	
Easton Shrine Classic	
AT&T Park, San Francisco, Calif.	
East vs. West	
NFLPA Collegiate Bowl	
Phoenix, Ariz.	
American vs. National	

NCAA FCS playoffs

Colgate	Colgate
Saturday, Jan. 11	
At Toyota Stadium	
Frisco, Texas	
North Dakota State (15-0) vs. James Madison (14-1)	



LYNN SLADKY/AP

Florida running back Lamical Perine, right, had 181 total offensive yards with two rushing touchdowns and a touchdown catch in a 36-28 defeat of Virginia in Monday's Orange Bowl in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Perine powers No. 6 Florida

Senior RB has 3 TDs in Orange Bowl defeat of Virginia

By STEVEN WINE

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Lamical Perine scored on a 61-yard run in the opening minute and didn't stop until he climbed onto a platform for the postgame ceremony to receive the Orange Bowl's most valuable player trophy.

Perine totaled 181 yards rushing and receiving with three touchdowns Monday to help No. 6 Florida beat Virginia 36-28.

The win means the Gators (11-2) will likely finish in the Top 10 in consecutive seasons for the first time since 2008-09. Second-year coach Dan Mullen credited Perine and the rest of the senior class with leading the resurgence.

"They restored the Gator standards and are building what we want to build," said Mullen, who improved to 21-5 at Florida.

"My sophomore year, we were 4-7," Perine said. "We came back and had two double-digit wins. It's great, man."

Perine carried 13 times for a career-high 138 yards rushing at the end of a so-so senior season. He came into the game with only

538 yards rushing this year in the Gators' pass-oriented offense.

"He's one of the top running backs in the SEC," Mullen said. "People say, 'The stats say this, the stats say that.' But every time we needed a big run this season, he came up with it."

Perine was too quick and speedy for the Cavaliers, as his dash through their secondary on the first series showed. He also scored on a 10-yard run and caught a 16-yard touchdown pass from Kyle Trask.

The Cavaliers (9-5) lost their final two games but still posted their highest win total since 2007.

Trask capped a storybook junior season by throwing for 305 yards. He was lightly recruited and in late September became a starter for the first time since the ninth grade.

"This game is huge for this program," Trask said. "We just continued to grind every single week, and here we are winning the Orange Bowl. It's pretty incredible."

Florida totaled 549 yards, including a season-high 244 rushing, and didn't punt until midway through the third quarter. The

Gators exposed the weaknesses in a Virginia defense that allowed more than 23 points per game and gave up 62 to Clemson in an Atlantic Coast Conference title game loss.

"Tonight we faced a team that they decided they were going to stop the pass and drop a lot of guys into coverage," Mullen said. "We were able to take what they were giving us."

The Cavaliers' offense tried valiantly to keep up. Senior Bryce Perkins threw for 323 yards and four scores in the final game of his career.

Closing it out

Tanner Cowley's 52-yard catch-and-run led to a Cavaliers touchdown that cut their deficit to 27-21 early in the fourth quarter. The Gators answered with a touchdown set up by Perine's 23-yard run to the 1.

Virginia drove 75 yards for a touchdown with 38 seconds left, but Florida recovered the ensuing onside kick.

"We were a few plays short," Cavaliers coach Bronco Mendenhall said.

Bowl roundup

Cardinals rally past Bulldogs

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Micale Cunningham threw for 279 yards and two touchdowns and ran for 31 more, and Louisville capped coach Scott Satterfield's debut season by beating Mississippi State in the Music City Bowl.

The Cardinals (8-5) rallied from a 14-point deficit by scoring 31 straight points to finish their big turnaround from 2-10 last season. Louisville also finally beat Mississippi State on the field for the first time in six tries, though the series now is tied 3-3 thanks to a pair of forfeits by the Bulldogs in the 1970s.

Mississippi State (6-7) had been trying to finish the season with a three-game winning streak for the first time since 2013 and only the third time since the end of World War II. Instead, the Bulldogs go home having lost a bowl game in each of coach Joe Moorhead's two seasons.

California 35, Illinois 20: Chase Garbers threw four touchdown passes and ran for another score, leading the Bears over the Illini in the Redbox Bowl in Santa Clara, Calif.

Christopher Brown Jr. ran for 120 yards on 24 carries, and Makai Polk caught five passes for a season-high 105 yards as Cal (8-5) won its first bowl game since 2015.

Brandon Peters passed for 273 yards and one touchdown for Illinois (6-7) in his return after sitting out the regular-season finale with a concussion. Peters, who was shaken after diving out of bounds following a scramble late in the fourth quarter, completed 22 of 37 passes and added a team-high 68 rushing yards.

Western Kentucky 23, Western Michigan 20: Freshman Cory Munson kicked a career-long 52-yard field goal with no time left after a rules review to give the Hilltoppers a victory in the First Responder Bowl in Dallas.

Western Kentucky (9-4) drove 36 yards in 27 seconds before Munson kicked his third field goal. The clock had expired on a desperation heave that was knocked down, but Munson was given a chance on an additional play after a defensive substitution penalty against the Broncos for having 12 players on the field.

Citrus Bowl
Michigan vs. Alabama
AFN-Atlantic
7 p.m. Wednesday CET
3 a.m. Thursday JKT

Outback Bowl
Minnesota vs. Auburn
AFN-Sports
7 p.m. Wednesday CET
3 a.m. Thursday JKT

Rose Bowl
Oregon vs. Wisconsin
AFN-Sports
11:10 p.m. Wednesday CET
7:10 a.m. Thursday JKT

Sugar Bowl
Georgia vs. Baylor
AFN-Sports
2:50 a.m. Thursday CET
10:55 a.m. Thursday JKT

SPORTS

TIGER'S TALE

WOODS' COMEBACK AT MASTERS VOTED AP SPORTS STORY OF THE YEAR | PAGE 22



Tiger Woods celebrates as he wins the Masters on April 14 in Augusta, Ga. Fourteen years after his last Masters victory and 11 years after his last major, Woods claimed his fifth green jacket.

AP

Senior RB Perine scores 3 TDs as Florida defeats Virginia in Orange Bowl » Page 23



■ NBA's Leonard is AP Male Athlete of the Year, Page 20



■ Gymnast Biles voted top female athlete, Page 21



■ Karma had a great sports year in 2019, Page 22

Jags stand pat after going 6-10 » Page 18

